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Building Bridges for Women Through Service-Learning: Bringing Students and Communities Together To Combat Domestic Violence in Honduras

Darlene Metcalf-Bergeron

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**BUILDING BRIDGES FOR WOMEN THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING:
BRINGING STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER TO
COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN HONDURAS**

By

Darlene Metcalf-Bergeron

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A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

(in Liberal Studies)

The Graduate School

The University of Maine

December 2013

Advisory Committee:

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE STATEMENT

On behalf of the Graduate Committee of Darlene Metcalf-Bergeron, I affirm that this manuscript is a final and accepted thesis. Signatures of all committee members are on file with the Graduate School at the University of Maine, 5755 Stodder Hall, Orono, Maine 04469.

Dr. Kathleen March, Professor of Spanish

November 20, 2013

Date

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COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN HONDURAS**

By: Darlene Metcalf-Bergeron

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kathleen March

An abstract of the Thesis Presented
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
(in Liberal Studies)
December 2013

This thesis defines service-learning and domestic violence, while describing how bringing students and communities together through service-learning courses can build and has already built bridges for victims of violence against women. Collaboration is essential in the quest to raise awareness about domestic violence through education. This thesis will demonstrate through data and photojournalism this collaboration between students of SPA/MLC Service-Learning Classes of UMaine from 2006 through to and including 2011.

As the themes in this thesis develop the reader will also begin to question what lies just beyond our borders and behind closed doors for women of the twenty-first century. There are two compelling quotes that say in a few words what this thesis is all about. Isaac Newton stated, “We build too many walls and not enough bridges.” We (women) are often lost in society behind those walls, living in the shadows of forceful and oblivious patriarchal societies and communities. In order for these women to take a

stand and feel empowered to demand equality, say nothing about their human rights, the entire community needs education: education of the what and why and when of violence against women, and then the how and where and who of combatting such violence against women. First we have to ask ourselves: What is violence against women? Why does violence against women happen? When do acts of violence against women occur? And then, we need to follow-up with: How can violence against women be prevented or greatly reduced? Where do we go from here? Where do we start? Who needs to take responsibility and who needs to step up and lead the society and communities toward equality for women and intolerance for violence against women? Violence against women is being perpetrated each and every day, but building bridges through education is a fundamental and vital component in combating this societal malaise. As Ralph Ellison points out, “Education is all a matter of building bridges.”

“We build too many walls and not enough bridges.” 🌿 Isaac Newton

“Education is all a matter of building bridges.” 🌿 Ralph Ellison

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to those who have been instrumental throughout this whole process. First and foremost I would like to thank one of my biggest supporters, Dr. Kathleen March, who has been my professor (*la Profe*, as many of her students call her), my mentor, my thesis advisor, and my friend. *La Profe* has inspired me throughout the years and I have felt academically challenged by her to a degree I haven't felt in many years, because I'm a non-traditional student. For her a simple "thank you" is not enough.

Next, I would like to give my sincere thanks to the three people that I look up to with such admiration and respect. Without Renate Klein, Carey Nason and Susan Iverson, I would not be where I am today, and this thesis would not have happened. They have been my inspiration since the day I started working with them at the Safe Campus Project. We worked together as a team for many years building bridges to combat violence against women on campus and within the surrounding communities. Working within the UMaine campus and surrounding communities has given me valuable insight regarding the importance and power of education and advocacy.

However, the most important supporter in my life is my husband, Jeff Bergeron, who has been my main pillar throughout my academic years and is one of the most important people in my life, along with my three daughters, Suzanne, Nicole and Catherine Getán-Metcalf. I could have never achieved all that I have in my life without their constant and unwavering support and encouragements. One of my daughters, Suzanne, was especially instrumental in getting all the necessary documentation from the Université Paris 8 to complete my graduate school application requirements, which was no small task. It took my daughter and me over three years of emails, letters, phone

calls, appointments, and several visits to the university to finally receive all the required documents. Without Suzy's dogged determination and help this thesis would not have been written... and for that I cannot thank her enough.

Last but not least, I dedicate my research process and results to the courageous women and children of Santa Rosa de Copán, as well as the many service-learning students that have participated (several as return students) in the Service-Learning in Honduras class since its inception in 2004. However, a special heartfelt thank you goes to the extraordinary service-learning in Honduras class of 2011. Through their work and dedication this group of twenty incredible women demonstrated the true meaning and goals of service-learning.¹

Maria Biasin
Angela Bowen
Mary Calloway
Nicole Cormier
Kate Durost
Delaney Guerino
Kalie Hess
Caitlin Howland
Stacia Kingsbury
Susan Lamont
Meghan Martin
Meagan McCready
Whitney Salvail
Hannah Siebert
Catherine Sodini
Christina Starr
Fallon Sweeney
Susan Tuttle
Kristen Walker

¹ cf. National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at <http://www.servicelearning.org>

PREFACE

Through my work with the Safe Campus Project² at the University of Maine for seven years and being fluent in Spanish, I have been able to combine my interests in domestic violence and Spanish with service-learning. My research has allowed me a closer look at how domestic violence affects Honduran women and how service-learning students can aid in the building bridges process of combatting violence against women. This thesis research topic first presented itself unexpectedly as a project for a service-learning class to Honduras. While considering a wide variety of possible topics for a service-learning project in Western Honduras I began to wonder about the prevalence of domestic violence in the community I was about to visit. Having some background knowledge of domestic violence and the ability to communicate effectively in another language proved to be extremely advantageous in research and data collection in Honduras. I have been a fluent Spanish speaker for over twenty years and a freelance interpreter for the State of Maine and the Federal Government for almost ten of those years. My extensive knowledge of the Spanish language and culture was definitely a key factor in my research. My time in Honduras each year has been meaningful and successful. I am satisfied with what I have been able to accomplish in the relatively short period of time spent on-site during each trip to Western Honduras.

This thesis will show how both service-learning students and local communities can benefit through collaboration. In addressing domestic violence I present empirical evidence on the benefits of bringing academic and community perspectives together to raise awareness. This thesis will address and demonstrate service-learning students and

² From 2001 to 2012, the University of Maine's Safe Campus Project worked to promote a safe community for everyone. We strived to reduce sexual assault, relationship abuse, and stalking by encouraging healthy and consensual relationships. <http://www.umaine.edu/safecampusproject/index.htm>

communities working together to understand, reflect upon and combat violence against women in Honduras. This thesis not only contains data collected during research in Honduras, but also presents a photojournalistic viewpoint of Honduras, the people and the communities where the data were collected.

Photography has been an integral part of documenting my yearly service-learning on-site experiences and discoveries. I have always been drawn to photojournalism, such as the type done in *National Geographic* [*GeoMundo* in Spanish] because for me the photos are necessary to complement the story, and they can even tell their stories without the need for words. The profound magic of the photograph gives a moment of the past an ever present voice, opening up direct conversation between the two.

The research began in 2001 during my work with the Safe Campus Project, which was a domestic violence and sexual assault project initially funded by the Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women. I worked with an excellent group of highly skilled educators and advocates that led me through many years of raising awareness about violence against women and developing prevention, education and advocacy. The core group working on the Safe Campus Project included Dr. Renate Klein, founder and director; Carey Nason, coordinator; and Dr. Susan Iverson, policy specialist.

My first service-learning experience began with a Service-Learning in Honduras course offered through the Modern Languages and Classics Department at UMaine in the spring of 2006, led by Dr. Kathleen March. As a result of that first international service-learning experience, I found a research theme that I could undertake on an academic level and be passionate about at the same time. My research has continued and progressed through subsequent yearly service-learning trips [2006-2011]. Dr.

March led the very first service-learning trip to the same communities in 2004, and the collaboration between the UMaine and the communities in Western Honduras continues to date.

Dr. March was the perfect mentor for me and the many other students who trekked to Honduras. Her kind, yet firm, style of leading by example inspired me. As her advisee, every time I met with her to discuss the progress of my research, I was continually reminded of the wealth of knowledge she has acquired through leadership experiences; and I continue to learn and draw on that knowledge. During the final phase of writing this thesis, I was struggling to gain focus and clarity in a PowerPoint presentation of my research/work. I was trying to organize the seemingly overwhelming amount of materials and photos documenting my research, when Dr. March stopped me and, in not so many words, said “Take a deep breath, focus, and ask yourself these questions.”

She said, “What do you want them to know about “Building Bridges for Women Through Service-Learning”? What do you want to tell them? What do you want people to see and learn from what you have seen and learned? Why is your research important? You don’t need to fill your presentation with thousands of words and data, you can let your photos do the talking and they will tell the story if that is what you want. You’ll have your statistics and data in your thesis.” Therefore, I hereby present my data in this thesis, along with some poignant information and photos in the form of photojournalism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank my committee members for all the time they have spent tirelessly guiding me through this arduous process. They are my mentors and have been my greatest allies... they have always believed in me. I admire each one of them for their achievements; for they all have such expertise in their respective areas.

Dr. Mazie Hough, Dr. Renate Klein and Dr. Kathleen March have always been there for me no matter how **long** it took. Each one has given me the strength I needed, as well as their time, expertise, and guidance. If it were not for these invaluable professors and mentors, I would not be where I am today.... so thank you once again, I couldn't have done it without you!

Next, I would like to give a big **HURRAH** to Service-Learning and to La Profe [Kathleen March]. Thank you for making all those SPA 496 / MLC 496 Service-Learning in Honduras classes possible, not only for me, but for the many students that got the opportunity of a lifetime to participate... our lives have been changed forever. I join all the other voices in saying ¡**GRACIAS PROFE TE QUEREMOS MUCHO!**

I am grateful to all the SPA 496 / MLC 496 Service-Learning in Honduras students and *la Profe* March, to whom I extend a heartfelt thank-you, for sharing their photographs and allowing me to use and publish some of them in this thesis.

Finally, I would like to express my heart-felt gratitude to Chief Roland LaCroix and Lt. Paul Paradis for allowing me the much-needed flexibility in my job at the Police Department during the writing process of this thesis. Thank you Chief and Paul for supporting me throughout this long process. Your understanding and support has not gone unappreciated.

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³ cf. National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at <http://www.servicelearning.org>

⁴ The University of Maine Department of Modern Languages and Classics class designators for the yearly service-learning class are: SPA [Spanish] 496: Service-Learning in Spanish and MLC [Modern Languages and Classics] 496: Field Work in Modern Languages.

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CONTENT WARNING: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*This thesis contains descriptions of extreme violence,
as well as accounts of domestic violence.*

Content may be potentially upsetting to some.

INTRODUCTION: BUILDING BRIDGES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN WESTERN HONDURAS

Before my first service-learning class trip to Honduras, I had never heard of “service-learning,” but I was about to find out. We were told that we were going to get to know the community and its inhabitants by spending time with them, which would allow considerable time for talking, listening and learning. This 2006 service-learning class was my first; however, the course was in its third year and a community network had already been established from the two previous trips. This community network would allow students to connect or reconnect with previous contacts and projects, and also provide them the chance to establish new contacts that could lead to new and varied projects. It should be noted that these service-learning trips are at the students’ expense. In addition, it should be noted that many students volunteered to accompany the class on second and third trips, no longer for class credit, but simply for personal fulfillment.

Over the years of returning to Honduras with subsequent service-learning classes to carry out my research and data collection, I have had the opportunity to observe the students and the community as they worked their ways through the process of linguistic and cultural exchange. What I observed year after year was evident, for I could see that these experiences left an indelible mark on each and every one of them, and would probably last a lifetime. This topic will be addressed more extensively later on.

At the end and throughout my thesis, I present some poignant photos from the service-learning trips. This visual aspect includes select photographs that have been taken by myself and other participants of the yearly service-learning classes. These photos tell personal stories of the women, children and community through my eyes and those of the participating students. Those who have been part of one or many of these

experiences will immediately recognize and experience many feelings, thoughts and reflections; and my hope is that these emotions will be transmitted through my choice of photographs selected for inclusion.

Before carrying out this research, my perspective regarding domestic violence seemed somewhat clear-cut. However, throughout the years of my on-site investigation and research my once clear-cut ideas and solutions began to become unclear. With each on-site trip I got the opportunity to establish networks within the community.

The results of my research would have been totally different had I only been to Honduras once or twice. By returning time and time again over 6 years I was not only able to follow-up with victims, but also witness community resources and programming changes. In addition, with each subsequent visit, I was able to see changes (at times drastically) in the political environments and leaders, witness differing political views and political agendas mold and change the community interactions; as well as how social, financial and education levels affected women self-reporting domestic abuse. Each return visit to Honduras revealed more about the culture, legal system, politics, etc. My findings would not have had the same conclusions and observations if I not gone to Honduras year after year.

I found that less educated, unemployed women were quite anxious and willing, despite the danger that this represented, to share their stories, while more educated and employed women were more hesitant to share theirs. Educated and employed women could have more access to information about domestic violence, but didn't believe in the system to intervene and change anything. They also had much more to lose if confidentiality was breached. There is much less anonymity for women and children living in small neighborhoods and communities. I frequently heard uneducated women say, "everyone already knows he beats me," and those few educated women say, "if I talk

with someone people are going to find out, and nothing will be done to stop it anyway.” In the end, all had little or no confidence that their situations would change or even get better.

Educated and employed community leaders were important because they facilitated the contact and interviews with women. Moreover, some of these same women were or had been victims of violence, but it took them longer to ask questions, seek advice and slowly tell their stories. One particular woman, whom I had met during the second visit, began to open up only after my fifth visit. Her insight and interpretation would not have been possible without these subsequent return trips to Honduras. In reality, seeming women who are educated and employed have more to lose than those already disadvantaged in society. However, I realized that those most willing and open about their experiences with abuse were those women having nothing else at all to lose... except their lives.

The fact is that domestic violence affects all women and children. It does not discriminate; it has no social, racial, financial or educational preferences. The solution to eradicating violence against women is not a simple one; it is an extremely complex and complicated social problem within the community and the entire country as well. It does not appear that this social malaise will be fully addressed any time in the near future. Social change is needed, but social change cannot or will not happen unless the situation is acknowledged and addressed by those having the power to do so.

CHAPTER 1: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is not a new phenomenon in the world, but only recently has the world started to address this type of violence as an important violation of human rights.

The first historic step toward establishing basic human rights was set forth by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations, which called for all basic human rights to be respected and enforced in all member countries. The declaration set forth the idea that “All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms.” (United Nations, 2008).

Despite the benefits of this Universal Declaration of Human Rights many women’s activists felt it did not adequately address the interests and needs of women. By not addressing the specific needs and interests of women this declaration did not provide protection for women’s individual rights and, in fact, some saw it as prejudicial to women.

It was not until 1979 that the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in an attempt to address this criticism and focus on women’s rights in particular. The Convention is essentially the international bill of rights for women in that it defines what constitutes discrimination against women. Discrimination against women as defined by the Convention is:

... any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. (United Nations, 2007).

However, the 1979 Convention did not specifically mention violence against women, and it wasn't until 1992 that the Convention on the Eliminations of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was revised and updated to include violence against women into the definition of discrimination.

By ratifying the Convention a country is legally bound to put into practice all of its provisions and is committed to showing compliance through periodic national reports. Adherence to this convention indicates that the country accepts and agrees that "... the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields." (United Nations, 2007).

At the present there are 185 countries that have ratified the Convention⁵, which is an important first step in the quest for global equality in all regards for women. Although it would be ideal to have all (100%) of members of the United Nations sign the Convention, having over ninety percent of them on board is a very good start. (United Nations, 2007).

1.1. International Human Rights for Women

Violence against women was not seen as an important issue of concern. The victims of violence suffered in silence and behind doors, away from the public eye. It wasn't until the 1980s when things began to change with the adoption of the CEDAW Convention by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 34/180, a change that would happen on a local and international level.

The Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981 as the first global and comprehensive legally binding international treaty aimed at the elimination of all forms of sex- and gender-based discrimination against women. (<http://legal.un.org/avl/ha/cedaw/cedaw.html>).

⁵ Honduras signed the Convention on June 11, 1980 and it was ratified on March 3, 1983.

Women's groups organized locally and internationally in order to bring attention to the plight of millions of women suffering from physical, psychological, and economic abuse. Today, awareness regarding violence against women has come a long way and is now recognized as a legitimate human rights violation that threatens the health and well-being of not only the abused women, but their families, their communities, their countries and the entire world. (United National 2008 May 26-28) (World Health Organization 2005).

Violence against women and gender-based violence has received international attention in recent years, resulting in some limited research. However, the research thus produced has been basic and of minimal use. This is progress, but to achieve real results extensive research on both victims and abusers needs to be exhaustively and conclusively performed to learn the who, why, and how of domestic violence. Only then can we begin to implement effective interventions worldwide. According to the World Health Organization "until fairly recently, the majority of research on violence consisted of anecdotal accounts or explanatory studies performed on non-representative samples of women, such as those attending services for battered women." The World Health Organization goes on to say that although "this research has played a critical role in bringing to light the issues of wife abuse, rape, trafficking, incest, and other manifestations of gender-based violence, it is less useful for understanding the dimensions or characteristics of abuse among the broader population."⁶ (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005).

The worldwide community is finally acknowledging and accepting that "violence against women destroys the lives of many people, fragments the communities and creates

⁶ cf. Researching Violence against Women: A practical guide for researchers and activists, published by the World Health Organization PATH 2005.

an obstacle in the development of the nations.” (Noeleen Hayzer, Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women from October 1994 – September 2007⁷).

Violence against women is much broader area than domestic violence, and includes a wide array of injustices and inequalities suffered by women all over the world. These injustices include, but are not limited to, inequality for women in work and pay, in the political arena, in decision making regarding family and finances, etc. Violence against women is a complex, worldwide problem and such violence needs to be addressed. However, since the more specific area of this research pertains to domestic violence, this thesis will henceforth primarily focus on domestic violence in Honduras.

⁷ Noeleen Hayzer was appointed to head the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the leading UN agency to promote gender equality and empowerment of women. Under her leadership, UNIFEM played a vital role in helping countries to formulate and implement legislation and policies to ensure women's security and rights. At UNIFEM, she focused on promoting women's leadership in conflict resolution, ending violence against women, and combating HIV/AIDS from a gender perspective. The United Nations Development Fund for Women, commonly known as **UNIFEM** (from the French "Fonds de développement des Nations unies pour la **femme**") was established in December 1976 [Fondo de Desarrollo de las Naciones Unidas para la Mujer].

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis, which took place from 2006 through to 2011, will present the different phases of my research and will discuss how the principal themes of domestic violence and service-learning in Western Honduras were developed. I will start by defining service-learning and domestic violence. My research and literature review pulls together a picture of contributing factors of violence against women and what is being done to combat this violation of human rights. On-site experiences will then demonstrate service-learning, its importance, and how such hands-on learning relates to the main theme of domestic violence.

The methodology applied in my research is qualitative, using informal non-structured interviews as a main source of data collection. Some interviews with community leaders were structured, but still done in informal settings. Information from interviews was obtained from a variety of social and class levels. Although some of the women interviewed were poor and uneducated or illiterate, others were from the middle class and had well-paying jobs and respectable positions within the community. In addition to the official and informal data collected, there is a significant amount of anecdotal information from the media, citizens, NGOs, and information retrieved via interviews with local government officials and influential members of the community.

My conclusions and recommendations will be drawn from both on-site research, as well as information extracted from the review of the domestic violence literature, and will suggest possible ways of combating this constant violation of women's rights.

I feel my background played a beneficial and positive part in my role as the researcher. However, one thing I realized is that I had to keep my personal opinions and preconceived ideas in check in order to be as unbiased and impartial as possible about certain themes. I feel that I was successful in this task, which allowed an unbiased,

reflective view and open-minded understanding of what domestic violence looks like in Western Honduras. Although I am not Hispanic, my children are, I have lived in Venezuela eight years, followed by six years living in France, Spain and México, before coming back to reside permanently in Maine, USA. I became fluent in Spanish and have adopted much of the Venezuelan culture. I feel that this experience, as well as my experiences living in the three other countries has been extremely beneficial throughout my research in Honduras. I have an understanding of not only the Spanish language, but the Hispanic culture as well. The linguistic and cultural knowledge acquired throughout the years, as well as my perspectives of service-learning and having a domestic violence background, has helped me understand the themes in this thesis. My years of working with a domestic violence program were valuable in identifying, understanding and interpreting the perspectives of the many Hondurans with whom I spoke, whether they be advocates of domestic violence, supporters of victims of violence, victims of violence, and/or members of the community. Before continuing, I would like to clarify the words Hispano/a and Latino/a. I use Latino/a when referring to people from Latin America, in other words, all Spanish-speaking countries outside of Spain; and I use Hispanic when referring to the entire Spanish-speaking community.

Of all the literature consulted during the preparation of this thesis, one aspect stood out. which was the identification of prevailing theories that focus on major risks of violence against women. Within the many factors that promote or tolerate violence against women, there are four different ecological factor levels, individual (personal history), microsystem (situational), exosystem (social structures) and macrosystem (cultural values and beliefs), that need to be identified and understood when trying to address the violence women experience at the hands of their abusers.

These factors are all equally important in regards to how they affect violence against women, ranging from wide spread social factors (macrosystem and exosystem) to more precise personal factors (microsystem and individual). Closer examination of these factors reveals that the macrosystem factor refers to the cultural values and beliefs of the population, which usually stem from the patriarchal ideology of the social system; and the exosystem factor refers to the social structures, which are created by environmental stressors and social isolation. However, the microsystem factor refers to the more reduced situational scenarios caused by intrafamily stress and dependency relations; and the individual or developmental context factor refers to the personal history, which is affected by behavioral genetics, such as antisocial behavior and aggression, in addition to drug and/or alcohol abuse. (Malley-Morrison, 2004).

If the world is going to effectively end violence against women, each one of these factors needs to be addressed directly within each community, where these factors, although the same, can look very different and need to be addressed accordingly. It is important that women feel supported within their entire environment against all the types of violence they suffer. Studies have shown that women tend to identify themselves as victims and reach out for help in populations that provide more support and understanding about issues of violence against women.

In order to bring this human rights violation and social problem of domestic violence closer to home we can take a look at data from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program.⁸ The UCR Program⁹ is comprised of over 16,000 city, county and state

⁸ Over the years the UCR data has become one of Maine and America's leading social indicators. Maine's citizens look to UCR as the primary information source on the nature and extent of crime, while criminologists, sociologists, legislators, state and local planners, the media and academicians use the statistics for wide and varied research and planning purposes.

⁹ Since July 1973, the State Police have administered the program as a statewide, uniform method of collecting statistics on crime as it is reported to law enforcement and producing a reliable set of criminal statistics for use in law enforcement administration, operation and management. Additionally, Maine's

law enforcement agencies that voluntarily report data on crime. The monthly contributions of Maine's 150 law enforcement agencies represent the initial step in establishing an efficient statewide criminal justice information system (CJIS). (http://www.maine.gov/dps/cim/crime_in_maine/cim.htm).

Since this thesis addresses violence against women in Honduras from 2006 to 2011, the comparative information below was drawn from data of the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program for those dates. In 2006 there were 5,554¹⁰ reported domestic violence assaults, but by the year 2011 data show 5,360,¹¹ a decrease in domestic violence assaults. (see Tables 1 and 2 below).

statistics are forwarded monthly to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for inclusion in the annual Crime in the U.S. Report.

¹⁰ 2006 Crime in Maine Annual Report, Uniform Crime Reporting Division, State of Maine Department of Public Safety, September 7, 2007.

¹¹ 2011 Crime in Maine Annual Report, Uniform Crime Reporting Division, State of Maine Department of Public Safety, September 14, 2012.

<i>Domestic Violence Assaults Comparison Data 2005–2006</i>				
Situations/Relationships	2005 Number of Offenses	2005 % of Total	2006 Number of Offenses	2006 % of Total
Male Assault on Female				
Firearm	9	.2	10	.2
Knife, Cutting Instrument	28	.5	9	.2
Other Dangerous Weapon	45	.8	43	.8
Hands, Aggravated Injury	76	1.4	47	.8
Hands, Not Aggravated	3,038	55.7	3,121	56.2
Total Male Assault on Female	3,196	58.5	3,230	58.2
Female Assault on Male				
Firearm	4	<.1	5	<.1
Knife, Cutting Instrument	15	.3	14	.3
Other Dangerous Weapon	25	.5	17	.3
Hands, Aggravated Injury	16	.3	3	<.1
Hands, Not Aggravated	813	14.9	833	15.0
Total Female Assault on Male	873	16.0	872	15.7
Parent Assault on Child				
Firearm	1	<.1	1	<.1
Knife, Cutting Instrument	4	<.1	1	<.1
Other Dangerous Weapon	4	<.1	6	.1
Hands, Aggravated Injury	11	.2	14	.3
Hands, Not Aggravated	379	6.9	420	7.6
Total Parent Assault on Child	399	7.3	442	8.0
Child Assault on Parent				
Firearm	—	—	1	<.1
Knife, Cutting Instrument	3	<.1	3	<.1
Other Dangerous Weapon	7	.1	8	.1
Hands, Aggravated Injury	11	.2	3	<.1
Hands, Not Aggravated	465	8.5	390	7.0
Total Child Assault on Parent	486	8.9	405	7.3
All Other Domestic Assaults				
Firearm	—	—	1	<.1
Knife, Cutting Instrument	12	.2	6	.1
Other Dangerous Weapon	12	.2	11	.2
Hands, Aggravated Injury	16	.3	10	.2
Hands, Not Aggravated	465	8.5	577	10.4
Total All Other Domestic Assaults	505	9.3	605	10.9
Grand Total All Domestic Assaults	5,459	100.0	5,554	100.0
Domestic Assaults/Type of Weapon				
Firearm	14	.3	18	.3
Knife, Cutting Instrument	62	1.1	33	.6
Other Dangerous Weapon	93	1.7	85	1.5
Hands, Aggravated Injury	130	2.4	77	1.4
Hands, Not Aggravated	5,160	94.5	5,341	96.2
Total Domestic Assaults	5,459	100.0	5,554	100.0
Total All Domestic Assaults	5,459	46.1	5,554	47.5
Total All Reported Assaults	11,843	100.0	11,681	100.0

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

All offenses of assault between family or household members are reported as Domestic Assault and account for 47.5% of all assaults. During 2006 police reported 5,554 offenses, an increase of 95 (1.7%) from the 5,459 offenses reported in 2005.

Table 1: Domestic Assaults for 2005 and 2006 in Maine

<i>Domestic Violence Assaults Comparison Data 2010–2011</i>				
Situations/Relationships	2010 Number of Offenses	2010 % of Total	2011 Number of Offenses	2011 % of Total
Male Assault on Female				
Firearm	9	.2	15	.3
Knife, Cutting Instrument	23	.4	16	.3
Other Dangerous Weapon	41	.8	56	1.0
Hands, Aggravated Injury	63	1.2	90	1.7
Hands, Not Aggravated	2,749	53.7	2,740	51.1
Total Male Assault on Female	2,885	56.4	2,917	54.4
Female Assault on Male				
Firearm	1	<.1	3	<.1
Knife, Cutting Instrument	25	.5	19	.4
Other Dangerous Weapon	24	.5	31	.6
Hands, Aggravated Injury	10	.2	16	.3
Hands, Not Aggravated	1,020	19.9	1,074	20.0
Total Female Assault on Male	1,080	21.1	1,143	21.3
Parent Assault on Child				
Firearm	2	<.1	1	<.1
Knife, Cutting Instrument	5	<.1	4	<.1
Other Dangerous Weapon	9	.2	13	.2
Hands, Aggravated Injury	21	.4	19	.4
Hands, Not Aggravated	386	7.5	470	8.8
Total Parent Assault on Child	423	8.3	507	9.5
Child Assault on Parent				
Firearm	—	<.1	—	<.1
Knife, Cutting Instrument	2	<.1	5	<.1
Other Dangerous Weapon	4	<.1	7	.1
Hands, Aggravated Injury	—	<.1	6	.1
Hands, Not Aggravated	232	4.5	230	4.3
Total Child Assault on Parent	238	4.7	248	4.6
All Other Domestic Assaults				
Firearm	1	<.1	3	<.1
Knife, Cutting Instrument	3	<.1	15	.3
Other Dangerous Weapon	20	.4	14	.3
Hands, Aggravated Injury	9	.2	12	.2
Hands, Not Aggravated	458	9.0	501	9.3
Total All Other Domestic Assaults	491	9.6	545	10.2
Grand Total All Domestic Assaults	5,117	100.0	5,360	100.0
Domestic Assaults/Type of Weapon				
Firearm	13	.3	22	.4
Knife, Cutting Instrument	58	1.1	59	1.1
Other Dangerous Weapon	98	1.9	121	2.3
Hands, Aggravated Injury	103	2.0	143	2.7
Hands, Not Aggravated	4,845	94.7	5,015	93.6
Total Domestic Assaults	5,117	100.0	5,360	100.0
Total All Domestic Assaults	5,117	45.1	5,360	40.9
Total All Reported Assaults	11,341	100.0	13,102	100.0

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

All offenses of assault between family or household members are reported as Domestic Assault and account for 40.9% of all assaults. During 2011 police reported 5,360 offenses, an increase of 243 (4.7%) from the 5,117 offenses reported in 2010.

Table 2: Domestic Assaults for 2010 and 2011 in Maine

However, if we look at the Murder Distribution by Circumstances from those same two years, 2006 & 2011, data from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program shows that the deaths or murders from domestic conflict rose from 8 (38.1%) in 2006¹² to 12 (46.2%) in 2011.¹³ This data is a clear indicator that although domestic violence assaults have diminished since 2006, deaths resulting from domestic violence have increased considerably. (see Tables 1 & 2 and 3 & 4).

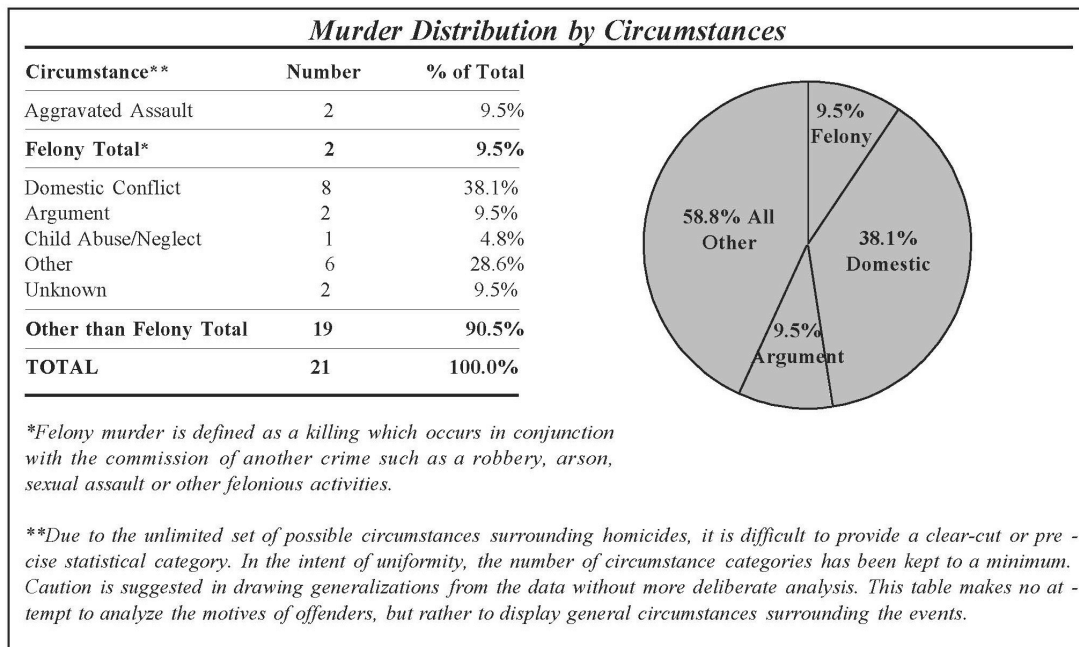


Table 3: Murder Distribution by Circumstances in 2006

¹² 2006 Crime in Maine Annual Report, Uniform Crime Reporting Division, State of Maine Department of Public Safety, September 7, 2007.

¹³ 2011 Crime in Maine Annual Report, Uniform Crime Reporting Division, State of Maine Department of Public Safety, September 14, 2012.

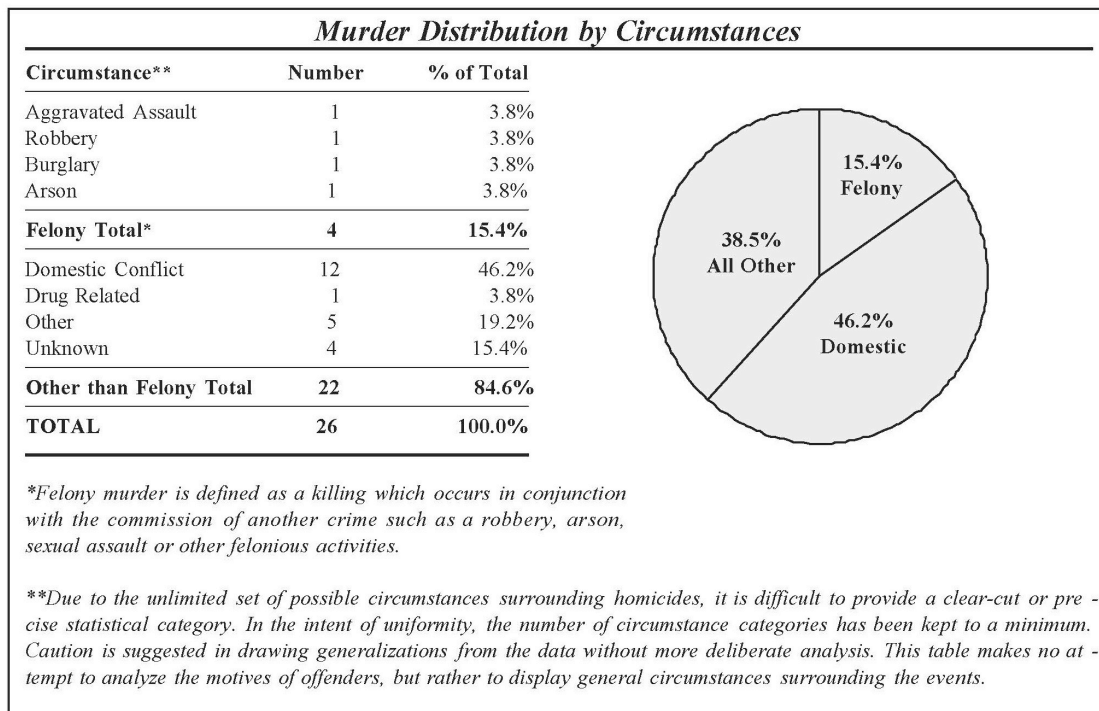


Table 4: Murder Distribution by Circumstances in 2011

These are indicators that violent deaths have increased. Therefore, we have to assume that domestic abuse and violence are also on the rise. This demonstrates that domestic violence is becoming more violent and the victims are many, for which communities need to take a more proactive approach in prevention and detection before the situations become deadly.

The Maine Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel¹⁴ is a 26-member panel established in 1997 to review cases of domestic violence homicides and offer recommendations to improve coordination and community response that will help protect people from domestic violence. This Panel is a model that can be replicated by other

¹⁴ cf. http://www.maine.gov/ag/dynld/documents/Working_Together_to_End_Domestic_Violence_04-11-12.pdf "Working Together to End Domestic Violence Homicide in Maine" The 9th Report of the Maine Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel, April 2012.

communities as a method of prevention and education of local police and legal authorities. Panel members include police officers, prosecutors, medical examiners, judges, nurses, doctors, teachers, domestic abuse prevention advocates, social workers and others. This panel is truly a much-needed collaborative effort within the community. Together community members can raise awareness within the community about how to help people better understand the signs of abuse and learn the best ways to seek help for himself or herself, a co-worker, a friend or even a family member.

For comparison purposes, information on domestic violence assaults and related deaths in Honduras shows a more disturbing trend. “According to the Special Prosecutor for Women, the Public Ministry receives over 20,000 complaints of spousal abuse annually.” (<http://www.refworld.org/docid/4f4353d32.html>).

The Public Prosecutor’s Office estimated that 150 women were murdered in 2006 by their abusers and that number steadily increased over the next 3 years, doubling to an estimated 363 by 2009. However, women’s rights organizations question the figures published by the Public Attorney’s Office, claiming the real numbers are higher. (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/honduras/>).

In an article published by Noticias Univisión, an American Spanish-language information site, the Special Prosecutor for Women in the Public Ministry (Fiscalía [Especial] de la Mujer del Ministerio Público) stated that [translation] “more than 1,500 women were murdered in Honduras between 2008 and 2011.” (25 Nov. 2011). (<http://www.refworld.org/docid/4f4353d32.html>).

Special domestic violence courts were reportedly overwhelmed by the tens of thousands of complaints received in recent years. Amnesty International reports that, according to the special prosecutor for women’s affairs, nearly a third of the women who submitted domestic abuse complaints were eventually killed by their abusers. (<http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/countries-crossroads/2007/honduras>).

According to data from a study by some organizations for the protection of women, 96 percent of the murders committed in the country between 2005 and 2010 were [translation] “awaiting resolution or would simply go unpunished.” This impunity is the result of [translation] “deficiencies in the investigative process.”(La Tribunal 31 Oct. 2011). (<http://www.refworld.org/docid/4f4353d32.html>).

The police and the judicial systems in many Latin American countries need to take the crimes against women seriously. We will see attitudes regarding the abuse and violence against women and girls change only if such steps are taken.

(<http://csis.org/publication/latin-america-women-still-confront-violence>).

The responsibility of prevention and detection falls to everyone, from policy makers to law enforcement to community leaders and members. Oftentimes there are many red flags and clues that should have been detected... if only people would recognize/acknowledge them and act instead of keeping quiet and hoping for the best outcome, which, as we can see from information from Honduras and the Maine Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel’s 9th biennial report,¹⁵ does not always happen.

¹⁵ cf. http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/index.php?topic=AGOffice_Press&id=371960&v=article10 “Working Together to End Domestic Violence Homicide in Maine ” The 9th Report of the Maine Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel, April 2012.

CHAPTER 3: AN ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

One way of visualizing domestic violence is through sociological imagination. Sociological imagination is the ability to make the connection between the macro¹⁶ and micro¹⁷ level in society; the ability to distinguish between personal troubles and societal issues; the ability to put private experience in context with society and history; and the ability to grasp history and biography and the relationship between the two. (Mills, 1959).

Whether it is domestic violence or other social problems, such as unemployment, crime, obesity, mental illness, etc. This sociological concept allows for some of the blame to be transferred from individuals to society as a whole. This allows us (society) some introspection to see where we (society) are responsible for some of the social problems of the world. It forces us to take some of the blame instead of always pointing fingers elsewhere or shrugging our shoulders, so we (society) can work toward social change.¹⁸

Table 5 demonstrates the different levels of society through an ecological framework for explaining gender-based violence. (Heise, 1998). Violence against women evolves within the micro levels of “personal troubles” within the home of the **Individual** and expands into the surrounding dynamics of the **Family**. The macro levels can be seen in the larger societal groups that create “society issues” for the **Community** and **Society**. When applying the ecological framework to visualize Honduran women’s homes, their

¹⁶ Macro level - large group (a country, a whole school compared to a class)

¹⁷ Micro level - small group (a person, a single person compared to a community)

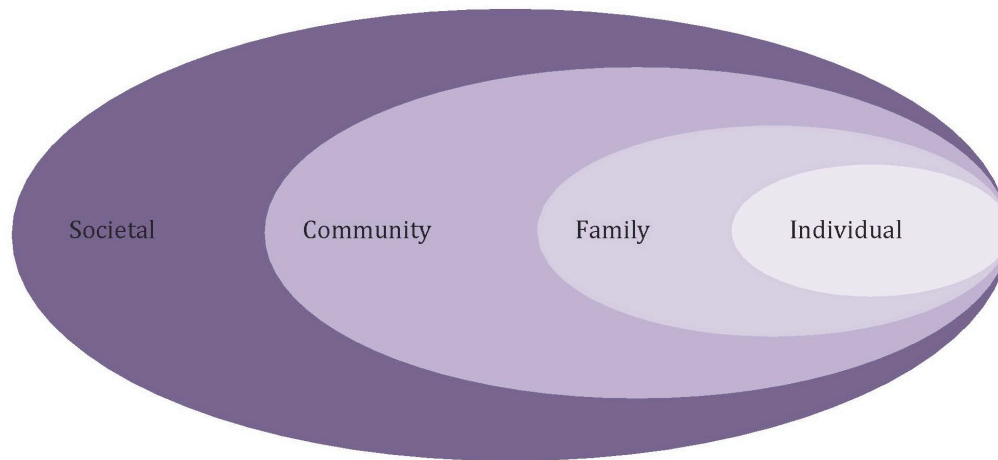
¹⁸ Sociological Imagination Concept as it Relates to Domestic Violence, Retrieved November 11, 2012 from:

http://www.123helpme.com/servlet/p1.CartController?action=return&CustomID=A_Ha6b362iEsGd1NBDBCCHD&tx=4RR451797H6662133&st=Completed&amt=6.95&cc=USD&cm=A_Ha6b362iEsGd1NBDBCCHD&item_number=

families and communities, as well as the Honduran society, consider the following: A woman lives with violence within the home, which is tolerated by the surrounding family members, which is in turn tolerated, ignored, overlooked, or accepted by the surrounding community (general population, courts, law enforcement, judges, community leaders, etc.), thus creating a hostile environment for those efforts undertaken to raise awareness and combat violence against women. Finally, there is the problem concerning the creation, enforcement, and funding of policies focused on gender violence prevention and advocacy due to a gap in the education of the population.

Therefore, we can conclude that although violence is a personal problem, it is also one that is found throughout society, which makes it a societal burden. Now, if we look at violence against a woman (her biography) as a personal problem then that is one person's problem, but if this problem is expanded to a large group of women (community and society) over a long period of time, then this problem surpasses the biography of an individual and becomes history. Therefore, if we use our sociological imagination and look at the relationship between the biography and the history of violence against women the perspective changes, thus allowing this problem to be seen as a societal issue.

AN ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EXPLAINING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Societal

- Norms and laws granting men control over female behavior
- Violence accepted for resolving conflict
- Masculinity linked to dominance, honor or aggression

Community

- Isolation of women and family
- Delinquent peer groups
- Low socio-economic status

Family

- Marital conflict
- Male control of wealth and decision making in the family
- Poverty
- Unemployment

Individual

- Being male
- Witnessing marital conflict as a child
- Absent or rejecting father
- Being abused as a child
- Alcohol use

(From Heise, 1998.)

Figure 1: An Ecological Framework for Explaining Gender-Based Violence

Efforts for social change regarding this growing societal problem, and grave human rights violation against women, need to be ongoing and more proactive than they have been in the past. As noted above, this is not just about equality for an individual, but has become an issue of great concern throughout history. Figure 2 below is the

Equality Wheel, which indicates what true equality looks like. The goal of nonviolence will lead to true equality and respect within the home, as well as within the community and society as a whole.

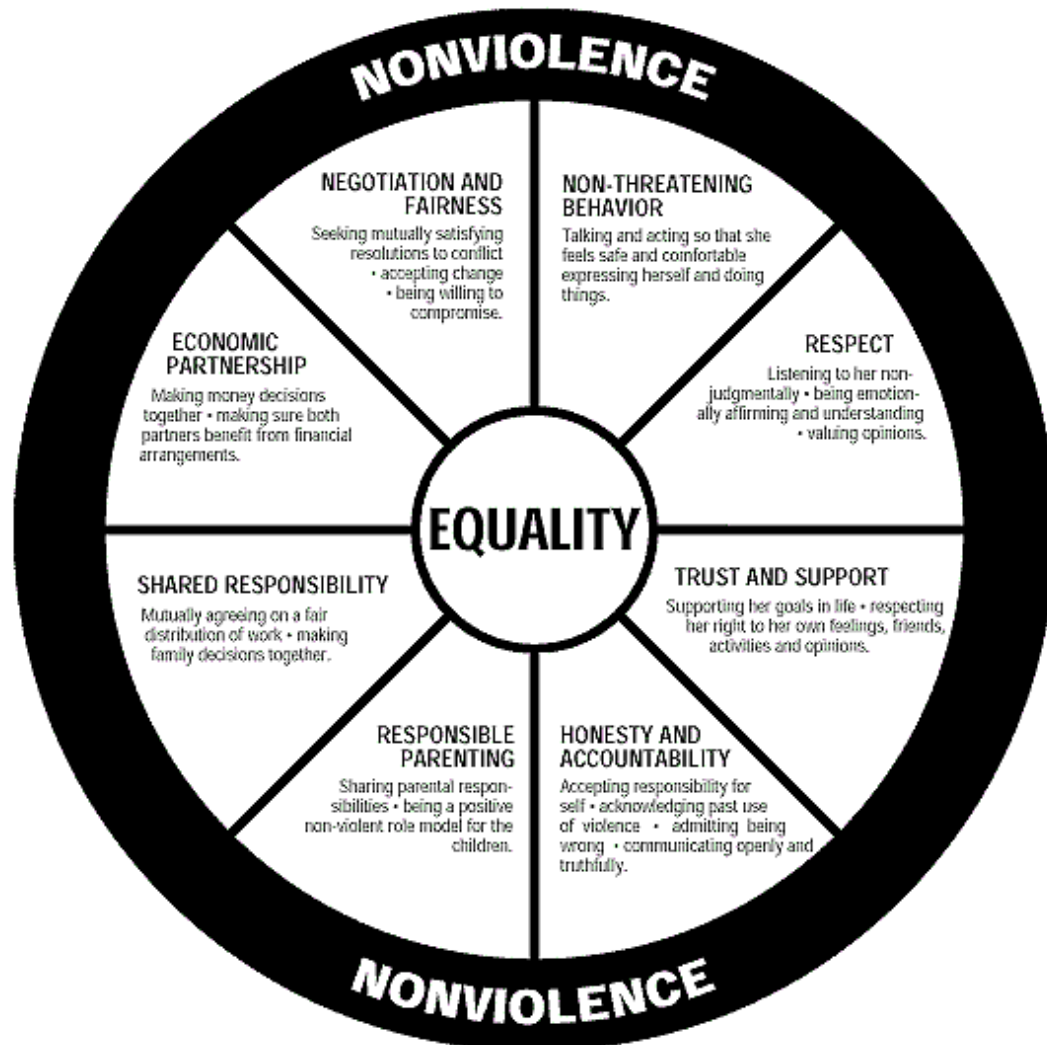


Figure 2: Equality Wheel¹⁹

¹⁹ Developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) in Duluth, Minnesota.

3.1 Contributors to Domestic Violence

Many myths exist about domestic violence. The following myths and facts²⁰ will help shed some light on the very thoughts and ideas many people have regarding domestic violence, which is much more complex than the myths lead one to believe. (For more myths and facts see Appendix A).

Myth: Woman abuse is a new social problem.

Fact: Woman abuse is not new. It has been condoned throughout history. For example, the widely used term "rule of thumb" comes from a 1767 English common law that permitted a husband to "chastise his wife with a whip or rattan no wider than his thumb."

Myth: If the victim didn't like it, she would leave.

Fact: There are many reasons why women may not leave, including fear for herself, her children and even her pets. Not leaving does not mean that the situation is okay or that the victim wants to be abused. A woman may feel she cannot leave an abusive relationship for the following reasons:

- ◆ She hopes the relationship will get better.
- ◆ She doesn't want to break up the family.
- ◆ Her partner's abuse isolates her from friends and family.
- ◆ She is afraid her family and community will blame her for the abuse, or encourage her to stay.
- ◆ She feels ashamed and blames herself for the abuse.
- ◆ She fears for her own and her children's safety.
- ◆ She depends upon her partner's income.
- ◆ She has lost self-esteem because of her partner's abuse.
- ◆ She has nowhere else to go.
- ◆ Her partner has threatened to harm her if she leaves.

The most dangerous time for a woman who is being abused is when she tries to leave. It has been estimated that the danger to a victim increases by 70% when she attempts to leave, as the abuser escalates his use of violence when he begins to lose control.

²⁰ List of myths and facts compiled from the following websites:

<http://www.safeplace.org/page.aspx?pid=336>
<http://www.familydomesticviolence.org/myths.html>
<http://mcedv.org/what-is-domestic-violence-and-abuse>
<http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/domviol/myths.htm>

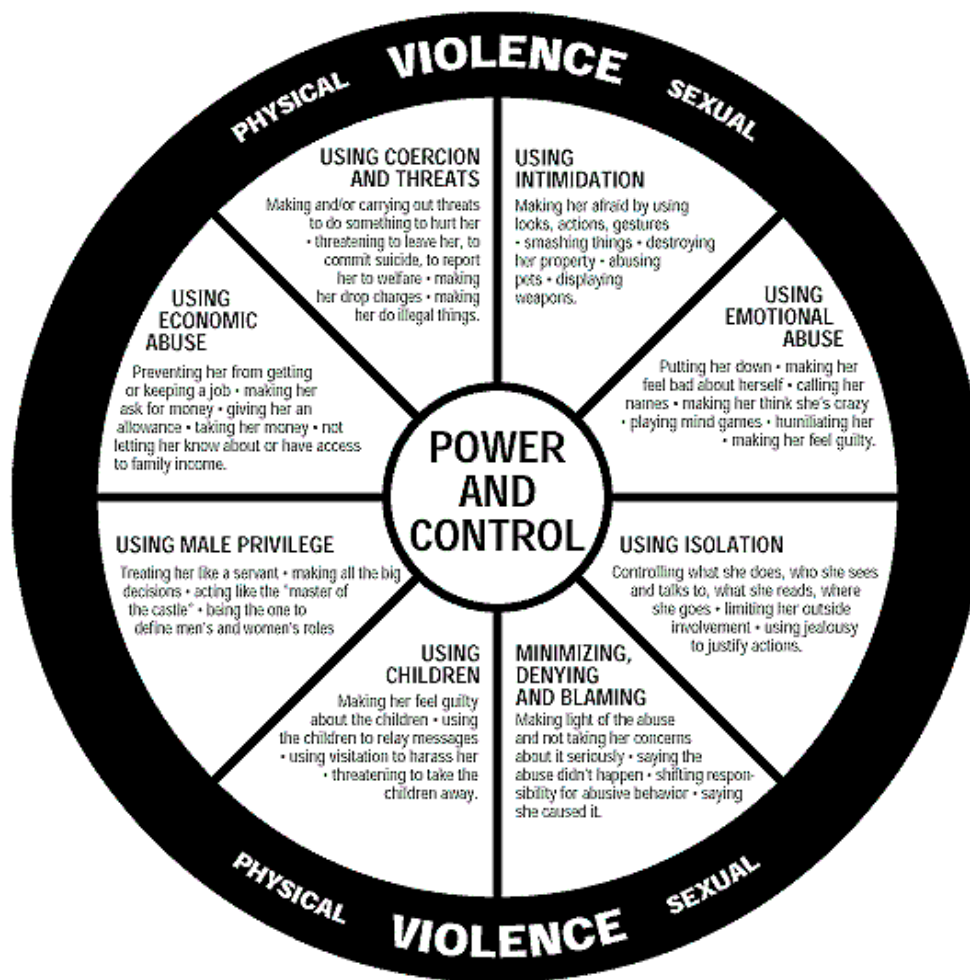
Domestic violence has repercussions in all aspects of a community. Ending domestic violence requires a social, political, and economic environment to ensure that all people affected by domestic abuse and violence are supported and abusers are held accountable. Everyone must be part of the solution.

The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota developed the Wheel of Power and Control.²¹ This and other “Wheels” have been developed to help visualize what different types of violence looks like. This Wheel of Power and Control is used worldwide. Figure 3 demonstrates what domestic violence looks like in the lives of families experiencing abuse. This same wheel has been translated into Spanish and is used as a training tool in Honduras. (see Figure 4).

One interesting thing that I observed during my time spent in Honduras was that no one really speaks English. English seems quite foreign to even the most professional, well-educated and well-employed people I met. This lack of knowledge of English is a limiting factor for educators and trainers. On several occasions people expressed a desire to access the most current and updated information, which is mostly published in English. Honduras mainly depends upon Spain [Agencia Española de Cooperación] for educational and informational materials. However, they would like to be able to tap into resources from the United States, which they see as more current and desirable. I was repeatedly asked to share my knowledge on domestic violence, however little that was, with various groups.

²¹ The Power and Control Wheel was developed from the experience of battered women in Duluth who had been abused by their male partners. It has been translated into over 40 languages and has resonated with the experience of battered women worldwide. cf. Wheel of Power and Control <http://www.theduluthmodel.org/>

One potential problem I see with the Hondurans retrieving resources from the United States, even those translated into Spanish, is that they may contain misinformation due to incorrect translations. I have seen many translated documents that do not take into account certain cultural and social aspects. In order for information to be effective it needs to be culturally and socially appropriate to the target audience. One example, which comes to mind, is that the information retrieved may instruct the victim to call the hotline for help. Well, many of the abused women are extremely poor and have no access to a telephone... and there is no hotline service in the area for these women to call anyway.



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Figure 3: Power and Control Wheel



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Figure 4: Power and Control Wheel in Spanish

3.1.1. Socio-Cultural Role

“The system educates us to think that violence is normal and that women are born to suffer. Our work is to unmask this system because violence against women is never justified.” (Lanza, 2010).²² The following table shows some of the socio-cultural patterns that encourage violence against women. These patterns are transmitted to boys and girls throughout their lives in verbal, as well as nonverbal communications.

Boys are taught not to cry, because they are men [macho].	Girls are allowed to cry.
Boys have the authority over younger brothers and sisters.	Girls are under the authority of their fathers and brothers.
Boys hit their siblings.	Sometimes girls hit younger siblings.
Boys have had to get into fistfights at school to demonstrate strength.	Girls have been taught to curb aggressive behaviors, because they have to behave and know their place.
Men see women as subordinates.	Women believe that men are more worthy/better.
Men have bad habits, and drink alcohol and beer. Frequently come home drunk.	Women do not have bad habits and are criticized if they drink and smoke.
Men are womanizers and like to manhandle women.	Women have to be virgins and take care of their reputations. Should not flirt.
Men are macho/tough.	Women are good housewives.
If men impregnate a woman they don't have any obligation/responsibility towards her or the child.	Women are shunned and thrown out of the home if they become pregnant.

(Source: *La ruta critica de las mujeres afectadas por la violencia intrafamiliar en América Latina: Estudio de caso en diez países Belice, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá, Perú*)

Table 5: Socio-Cultural Patterns that Encourage Violence Against Women

²² Gladys Lanza Ochoa is the Coordinator of the **Movimiento de Mujeres por la Paz Visitación Padilla** (Honduran Women's Committee for Peace "Visitación Padilla").

Table 6 sums up the socio-cultural role of communities, indicating the common visions and perceptions of how and why domestic violence affects society and no men are its victims. Moreover, and most important, this table indicates alternative visions for the perspectives held by society, which is the key to effectively addressing and eliminating violence against women.

	Common Visions	Different Visions	Alternative Visions
Perception of violence and its manifestations.	<p>Violence as a common problem that affects women, girls and boys.</p> <p>Physical and psychological violence is acknowledged.</p> <p>Sexual violence is acknowledged only if it is directed toward boys and girls or is carried out by strangers.</p> <p>Patrimonial²³ and sexual violence in marriage is not acknowledged.</p>	<p>Violence as a common problem that mainly affects women at all ages.</p> <p>Physical, psychological and sexual violence is acknowledged.</p> <p>Patrimonial violence is not acknowledged.</p>	<p>Violence as a common problem that is mainly carried out against women of all ages as a control mechanism.</p> <p>Physical, psychological, sexual and patrimonial violence, and its manifestations are acknowledged.</p>
Perception of the causes of violence.	<p>Natural and/or external factors not controlled by the individual: alcohol, poverty, unemployment, drugs, instincts, hormones, personality, etc.</p> <p>Provoked by the women.</p>	<p>Lack of communication and love.</p> <p>Machismo.</p> <p>Educational problems.</p> <p>Differentiated gender roles.</p>	<p>Abuse of power.</p> <p>Gender inequality.</p> <p>Subordination of women.</p> <p>Patriarchal culture.</p>
Perception of the solutions to violence.	<p>Individual actions of those victims: leave husband, work, file complaint, be better mothers and wives, etc.</p>	<p>Love and communication.</p> <p>Family dialogue.</p> <p>Family and institutional support for the victims.</p>	<p>State and NGO intervention.</p> <p>Change in the laws.</p> <p>Trainings and sensitization.</p> <p>Cultural and social change.</p>
Support these visions.	<p>The majority of providers and people in the community.</p>	<p>Some providers, some women in the community and young people.</p>	<p>Providers of NGOs for women.</p>

(Source: *La ruta crítica de las mujeres afectadas por la violencia intrafamiliar en América Latina: Estudio de caso en diez países* Belice, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá, Perú)

Table 6: Social Representation of Perceptions and Visions

²³ In Spanish the term “patrimonial” is used to indicate “economic.”

Figure 5 is the “Cultural Wheel.”²⁴ This wheel is the basic power and control wheel, but with additional sections added to illustrate how the role of communities, societal structures and cultures can affect violence against women.



Figure 5: Cultural Wheel

3.1.2. Impact of Domestic Violence on Women and Children

Domestic violence can have serious consequences for the women, both physical and psychological. One of the most frequent problems for the victim involves pressure from the perpetrator and his family not to report violence. This decision becomes very stressful for the victim because she is blamed for “doing this” to the aggressor. More often than not these women have been cut off [isolated by the perpetrator] from their

²⁴ Developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) in Duluth, Minnesota.

family members and find themselves alone and chastised by the aggressor's family. Table 7 indicates some justifications of why domestic violence is tolerated, especially in rural areas.

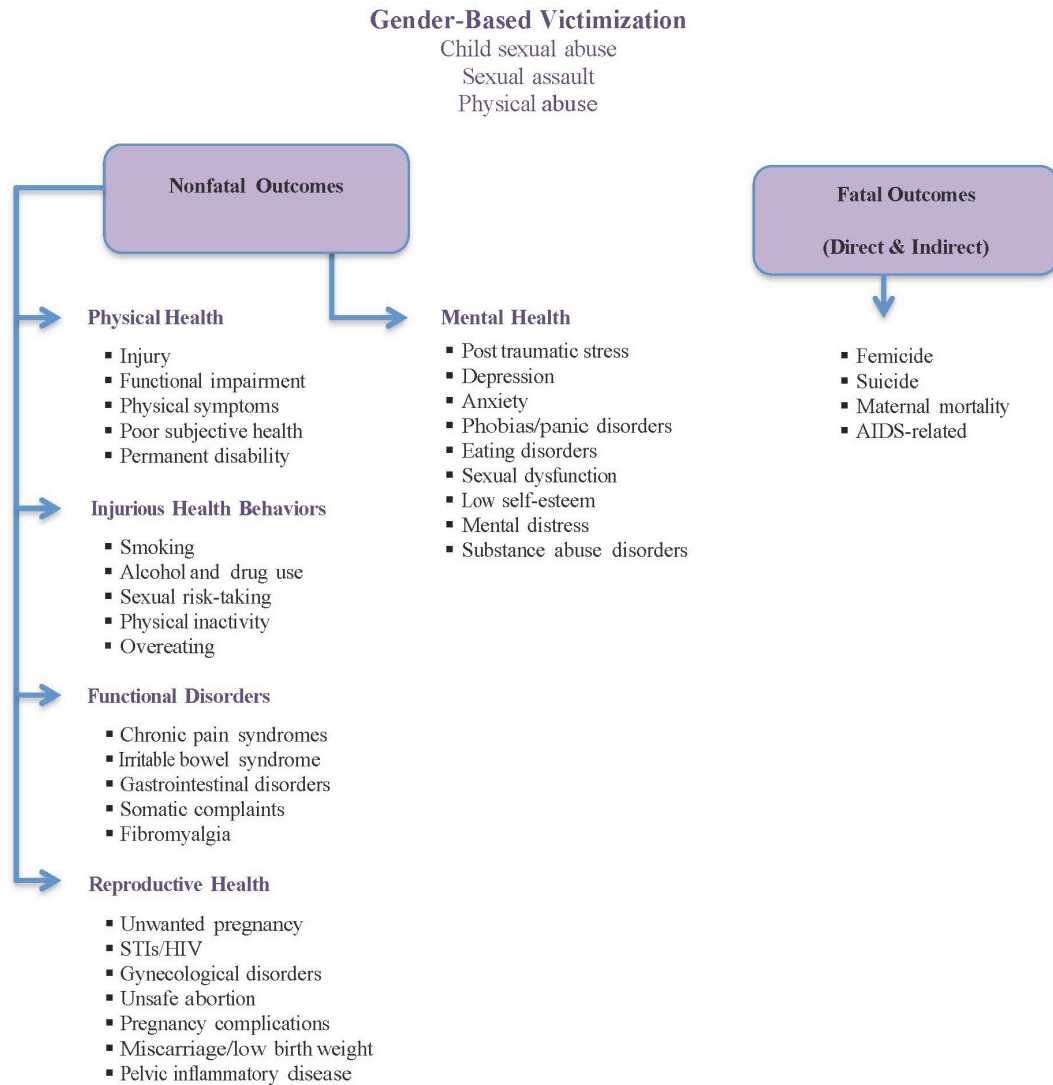
Why domestic violence is tolerated in rural areas.	
Reasons	Justification of Reason
Patriarchal Society	Violence was present in their lives throughout childhood, toward them or their mothers.
False beliefs or myths	They feel guilty because they believe they themselves provoke the violence they endure.
Economic dependence	They don't have a job in order to maintain the family without the help of the man.
Emotional dependence	Despite the abuse, they continue to love their aggressors; or they think that nobody will love them, especially if they already have children from another man.
Low self-esteem	They believe that they don't deserve to be treated better because they are women.
Feelings of guilt or embarrassment	Are afraid of what people in the community will say if they find out about the situation because everyone in the community knows them and they have a reputation to maintain.

(Source: Zamorano, Honduras, 2003)

Table 7: Why Domestic Violence is Tolerated in Rural Areas

Another important consideration is the diminished health of women who suffer violence at the hand of their abusers. There are serious costs associated with women's health because abuse diminishes their ability to be an asset to the community. Women who suffer from violence are much more likely to have physical, psychological and emotional illnesses that can impede them from being productive members of the community. Figure 6 maps out the many effects of violence against women. (Heise, 1999).

HEALTH OUTCOMES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



(From Heise et al, 1999.)

Figure 6: Health Outcomes of Violence Against Women

Violence against women creates many serious short- and long-term physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health problems for survivors and for their children, which in turn, leads to high social and economic costs.

Health effects can include headaches, back pain, abdominal pain, fibromyalgia, gastrointestinal disorders, limited mobility and poor overall health. In some cases, both fatal and non-fatal injuries can result. Intimate partner violence and sexual violence can lead to unintended pregnancies, induced abortions, gynecological problems, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Intimate partner violence in pregnancy also increases the likelihood of miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-term delivery and low birth weight babies. These forms of violence can lead to depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, emotional distress and suicide attempts. (<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/> 2012)

The social and economic costs of violence against women “are enormous and have ripple effects throughout society. Women may suffer isolation, inability to work, loss of wages, lack of participation in regular activities and limited ability to care for themselves and their children.” (WHO November 2012).

Children suffer the effects of domestic violence in numerous ways. These effects are as frightening as the violence they are subjected to in their homes, which is the place where one should feel the safest. The impact of domestic violence on children is profound and immeasurable. Children are at risk of being abused and even killed, and being emotionally, physically and psychologically scarred for life, which can lead to the continuation of the cycle of violence when they grow up. Children also risk emotional, physical and intellectual developmental delays, which they may carry with them throughout their lives; which reduces their chances for success and happiness.

Children affected, either directly or indirectly, by domestic violence in their homes are more likely to be neglected, and even abused themselves. These children have

emotional responses such as fear, sadness, shame, and guilt; suffer from sleep disturbances, depression and anger. Their physical responses can include bedwetting, headaches and/or stomachaches, and loss of ability to concentrate, often missing school, which affect their ability to learn and receive a good education. In addition, they often exhibit behavioral responses which can include acting out, withdrawal, anxiety and short attention span; often experiencing developmental delays in their speech, motor and cognitive skills. (<http://www.domesticviolenceroundtable.org/effect-on-children.html>).

According to the Children of Domestic Violence organization,²⁵ “leading researchers believe that childhood domestic violence is as damaging as physical child abuse.” These children “are 3x more likely to repeat the violence they see; 6x more likely to commit suicide; 50x more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol; and 74x more likely to commit violent crimes against another. A 2010 Senate Hearing indicated, “It changes who they are.” (<http://cdv.org/the-impact/>).

Children need and deserve to be safe in their homes and with their parents. They need to be talked to and listened to, cared for and shown how to care for others, and loved and respected instead of being neglected and exposed to violence. Figure 7 is the “Wheel of Love and Care for Your Children,”²⁶ which captures the important aspects of nurturing children, illustrates positive alternatives to abusive households.

²⁵ cf. <http://cdv.org/the-impact/>

²⁶ Developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) in Duluth, Minnesota.



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Figure 7: Love and Care for Your Children Wheel



Photo 1: This little girl, 5 years old, was headed down to the highway, at dusk, to sell tortillas her mother made.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras

The photo above was taken in 2007 along a footpath in one of the poorest and most neglected barrio of Santa Rosa de Copán. Three local medical workers volunteered to take me into this *barrio* to hand out toothbrushes and toothpaste to the children. What first struck me was the absent or empty look on this little girl's face, no smile, no emotion at all. She could not have been more than 5 years old. When this little girl and I met on the footpath late in the afternoon, my guides and I were going into the *barrio*, while she was heading away from her home toward the highway to sell the 5 or 6 tortillas her mother had just made. Her face was sad, her eyes void of all emotion, her hair was a tangled mess, her clothing was dirty and she had no shoes. As I approached to ask her name I was taken aback, once again, by the bruising and swelling on the right side of her face and those unforgettable tired empty eyes. As I handed her more than her share of the toothbrushes and toothpaste, we just stood looking into each other's eyes... I have not been able to get her image out of my mind, the image of the obviously neglected and abused 5-year-old child that is reflected in this photo.

We must ask ourselves why would this mother send her very young and vulnerable daughter out into this dark and dangerous barrio at night, down to the highway to sell a few tortillas. This barrio was extremely poor and inaccessible, only accessible by foot, inhabited by dirt floor houses with no electricity, no plumbing and infested by drugs and alcohol. This was no place for anyone to be out at night, especially a child.

Oftentimes, as I have learned over the years of my research, poor parents and families are so focused on the very basic needs of life (almost in survival mode), that the children are often neglected in so many ways, and even abused. Many very young children are made to work long and arduous hours with their parents, for their parents or taking care of younger siblings while the parents work.



Photo 2: Street vendors at *La Feria del Agricultor* outdoor marketplace.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras



Photo 3: Preparing vegetables at *La Feria del Agricultor* outdoor marketplace.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras



Photo 4: Making change for customers at *La Feria del Agricultor* outdoor marketplace.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras



Photo 5: Wrapping up a long day at *La Feria del Agricultor* outdoor marketplace.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras



Photo 6: At 5 years old, this little girl can only reach the washboard by standing on top of a crate.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras



Photo 7: Taking care of little brother while their parent work at *La Molienda*.
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras



Photo 8: Working at *La Molienda*.
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras



Photo 9: This young boy works long hours at *La Molienda*.
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras



Photo 10: Taking care of little sister while their parents are working.
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras



Photo 11: This young girl sells flowers at the marketplace.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras



Photo 12: Babies can be victims of violence.
San José Orphanage
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras



Photo 13: Children can be victims of violence.
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras

CHAPTER 4: HONDURAS, DEPARTMENT OF SANTA ROSA DE COPÁN AND ITS COMMUNITY



Map 1: Honduras: The World (Source: www.google.com)

Honduras is located in the northwest of Central America. It borders the Caribbean Sea, to the east of Guatemala, to the west of Nicaragua, to the southeast of El Salvador and the Gulf of Fonseca (North Pacific Ocean). For comparison purposes, Honduras is slightly larger than Tennessee. The population is estimated at 8,296,693 (July 2012 est.),²⁷ with 90% mestizo origin (mixed Amerindian and European), 7%, Amerindian, 2% black, and 1% white. Spanish is the official language. In addition, several Amerindian dialects are spoken. While many sources indicate that 97% of the population identify as Roman Catholic and 3% as Protestant, (*World Factbook*, 2009) (CIA.gov, 2012), other sources indicate that:

Although Honduras is traditionally Roman Catholic, membership in the Roman Catholic Church is declining while membership in Protestant churches is increasing, [especially among young people]. [...] The Evangelical movement is on the increase in line with its twentieth century rise in the other portions of Latin America.

²⁷ Note: Estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, higher death rates, lower population growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected.

(<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Honduras>).



Map 2: Honduras: Central America (Source: www.google.com)

Honduras is the second poorest country in Central American. Approximately 80% of people live in poverty with an unemployment rate of almost 50% unequal distribution of income. (*World Factbook*, 2009).

Honduras has also become a dangerous place for foreigners and locals alike. “Widespread poverty, corruption, legal impunity and fragile institutions have left this Central American country on its knees.” Honduras has earned the title of “murder capital of the world” having the highest murder rate in the world with “more than 80 murders per 100,000 people,”²⁸ which is attributed to the rise in gang and narco-trafficking activities,²⁹ especially in Western Honduras. Honduras has become a transit route for drugs and narcotics coming from South America on their way through to Mexico, the United States and the rest of the world. Corruption is a major problem that affects the country’s legal and criminal justice systems. In addition, Honduras has had a history of

²⁸ According to the United Nations this number is 10 times the average. Retrieved November 9, 2012 from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8iy_5dUgNA&feature=endscreen&NR=1 Note - This youtube video is narrated by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), which represents more than 30,000 members in 233 chapters throughout the world, working to advance philanthropy through advocacy, research, education and certification programs.

²⁹ Mexican Cartels have established a foothold on prime drug trafficking routes in Honduras.

political instability. In 2009, the current President, Porfirio Lobo, led a coup against then-President Manuel Zelaya creating instability within the country for some time. Due to the 2009 coup (just days after the 2009 service-learning group returned from the yearly visit) the 2010 visit was canceled.

Honduras is currently divided into 18 departments (*departamentos*). A governor, who is appointed by the President of Honduras, heads each department. The 18 departments of Honduras are divided into 299 municipalities (*municipalidades*). Municipalities have elected mayors (Spanish *alcalde*), as opposed to the appointed governors of departments. (<http://www.statoids.com/uhn.html>).

(<http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/honduras-map2.htm>). The Department of Copán is located in Western Honduras and is the poorest region of the county. It covers a total surface area of 3,203 km² and, in 2005, had an estimated population of about 320,562 people. Copán has 23 municipalities; one of those is the departmental capital town of Santa Rosa de Copán.

(<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ho.html>).

The closest airport to our Santa Rosa is located in San Pedro Sula, second largest city in Honduras, which is in the coastal region of northern Honduras. From San Pedro Sula to Santa Rosa de Copán it is about a four-hour bus ride.



(Source: http://www.fews.net/docs/Publications/Honduras_2012_03_EN.pdf)

Map 3: Santa Rosa de Copán: Capital of the Department of Copán

Santa Rosa de Copán is the departmental capital of the Honduran Department of Copán. Santa Rosa de Copán is the largest and most important city in Western Honduras with a population of 42,803, which makes it the administrative hub of the Department of Copán.

The historical center of Santa Rosa de Copán has been declared a Honduran national monument, with preservation of its Republican and Neoclassical architecture and cobblestone streets, which date from the era of a prosperous tobacco farming industry in the 18th century. (http://www.fews.net/docs/Publications/Honduras_2012_03_EN.pdf).



(Source: <http://www.honduras.com/santa-rosa-copan/>)

Photos 14 & 15: Architecture of Santa Rosa de Copán's Historic Center.

54.3% of the total population of Santa Rosa de Copán are women. *Las mujeres copanecas* [copaneca women] have an average of 5 children; the teen pregnancy rate is the highest in the country (average of first pregnancy at 15 years old) (Copaneca Women's Center in Santa Rosa de Copán, 2006).³⁰

³⁰ Information acquired in 2006 from the Copaneca Women's Center in Santa Rosa de Copán.

The family income in Western Honduras depends heavily upon the women. However, many women have low levels of education. The majority (47%) has some primary education, 34% have completed their secondary education, and 14% have no schooling at all. Only 5% of the women have completed university studies and obtained a university degree.³¹

4.1. Domestic Violence in Honduras

In thinking about how violence against women affects all women around the world, one might wonder what domestic violence looks like in different cultural settings and how it is addressed within these communities. There are some important questions to be asked when taking a close look at how women are affected by domestic violence, such as: What does domestic violence look like? Are there organizations/initiatives for women suffering from domestic violence? What services are available for women? How are these services offered? Are women accessing these services? How does domestic violence affect women and their communities? What are the existing domestic violence policies? What are the legal, physical and/or social implications of those reaching out for help? What are domestic violence agencies doing as outreach, advocacy, and education within communities?

The problem of domestic violence cannot be effectively addressed without looking at the causes and effects upon the community. Over the last six years I have become familiar with the problems and dynamics of domestic violence in their communities. My time in Honduras has been critically beneficial because I have been able to create a network of people and agencies that gave me access to a multitude of information and even arranged opportunities for me to speak with women in the community who have been affected by domestic violence. Acts of domestic violence, as

³¹ Information acquired in 2006 from the Public Health Regional Office in Santa Rosa de Copán.

well as violence against women, and those perpetrating those acts do not choose its victims because of their culture, race, or social status; it is an international, national and local problem that occurs on a daily bases to any women, man or child in any culture, to any race, and across all social status.

When looking at legislation regarding domestic violence, data shows that this started in the mid-1990s. In Latin America anti-domestic violence laws did not start appearing until after the Convention of Belém do Pará in 1994 (CAWN,³² November 2008). However, even though Latin American countries have ratified the Convention, ingrained ideas about violence against women have persisted and resources to promote change are scarce.

Social change comes about when women become empowered, allowing them to rise from the poverty that holds them back. “Poverty is an issue of women’s organisations but we must change the technical discussion of poverty into a political discourse. It is essential to empower women for them to come out of poverty.” Mirta Kennedy, CEMH – Honduras (<http://www.cawn.org>).

In Honduras, lobbying by women activists finally paved the way for national legislation against domestic violence when the Law Against Domestic Violence³³ was ratified in 1998. This law protects the physical, psychological, patrimonial and sexual integrity of women against all acts of discrimination or violence by their partners. Since this law has gone into effect in Honduras many initiatives, governmental and non-governmental, local and national, have highlighted the violence against women

³² For over 20 years The Central America Women’s Network (CAWN) has worked in the UK to raise awareness of women’s rights and international development. CAWN supports the struggles of women in Central America,... particularly those resisting violence against women. CAWN works in partnership with local women’s organizations and support the women’s movements... in Central America. <http://www.cawn.org>

³³ La Ley Contra la Violencia Doméstica.

component of women's human rights. More recently, women and women's groups have been instrumental in raising awareness and bringing this social problem to public view and into the political arena.

There are resources and options available for victims of domestic violence, but they need to know what they are, as well as where and how they can access them. That is done through extensive education, advocacy and outreach.

Over the last ten years or more, with the appointment of more women to strategic political and social positions, domestic violence has finally been brought to the top of many agendas. These women realized the need to raise awareness and used their influence to develop, promote, and offer services within the community. Education and awareness have taken many different forms from carrying out public events to working directly within the communities to create networks for women.

Sadly enough, regardless of the growing women's movements fighting for women's rights and the government's formal recognition of violence against women as a human rights issue, in Honduras one of the main obstacles for promoting agendas proposed to combat such violence is the patriarchal thinking that still exists today within the ideology of public institutions and political parties.

4.2. Domestic Violence in Santa Rosa de Copán

Domestic Violence is the crime most reported in the municipality, as well as on a national level. According to data retrieved in 2006 from the Public Health Regional Office and *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca* in Santa Rosa de Copán, 8 out of every 10 women in Honduras are victims of Domestic Violence. The following data indicate the complaints and cases of domestic violence within the community, as well as the organizations reporting it.

- ◆ *Comisionado Nacional de los Derechos Humanos* (National Commission for Human Rights), 90 complaints.
- ◆ *Dirección General de Investigación Criminal* (Office of Criminal Investigations), 100 complaints.
- ◆ *El Juzgado de Familia* (Family Court), 308 complaints.
- ◆ *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca* (Copaneca Women's Center), 407 cases.

(Source: Public Health Regional Office and *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca* in Santa Rosa de Copán, 2006)³⁴

The following organizations were all brought to the table with one common goal of educating the community about the effects of violence against women upon their community. A network between the different collaborating groups was formed. In 2003, they establish the women's center in Santa Rosa de Copán, the Copaneca Women's Center, in order to meet needs of a growing number of victims of violence. While the Governor of the Municipality provides guidance and 20% of the financial support, the Agencia Española de Cooperación is the principal provider of technical and financial support. Other entities that provide a variety of political, legal and medical support are the National Commission of Solidarity for Women, the National Commission for Human Rights, the Public Health Regional Office, the Vicente Fernando Mejía Health Center, the Municipal Police; as well as judges and lawyers of the Municipal Family Court System. (Source: Public Health Regional Office and *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca* in Santa Rosa de Copán, 2006)³⁵

In Western Honduras the *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca*³⁶ [Copaneca Women's Center], known in the community as the *Casa de la Mujer*, has played a mayor role as a

³⁴ Information acquired in 2006 from the Public Health Regional Office and *Centro de La Mujer Copaneca* in Santa Rosa de Copán.

³⁵ Information acquired in 2006 from the Public Health Regional Office and *Centro de La Mujer Copaneca* in Santa Rosa de Copán.

³⁶ <http://www.diba.es/urbal12/PDFS/centro%20copaneca-honduras.pdf>

source of information for women, as well as a safe and confidential place for all women to seek help and to network. However, the *Casa de la Mujer* is only a community resource center. Everyone that requests help is referred to Family Court or the Prosecutor.

El Juzgado de la Familia [Municipal Family Court] is the place where women need to go to file a complaint against the abuser. I was able to interview the judge and spend several days there with the court clerks and employees, who are responsible for receiving and processing the complaints. The environment was very informal and their system seemed to lack confidentiality for complainants. I was given access to several files, and also received photocopies of documents containing names, sanctions imposed, and other confidential information. In addition, there was no place that provided privacy when filing a complaint. This was done at a busy and noisy counter, surrounded by others in very close proximity. It appeared to be a normal practice for receiving and filing complaints of domestic violence and others issues in this manner. (*Juzgado de la Familia*, 2008).

4.2.1. *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca* [Copaneca Women's Center]

The doors of the Copaneca Women's Center have been open since 2003 to all women in need and services were provided free of charge. Rights and services are promoted through awareness events and campaigns throughout the year. A series of posters and informational pamphlets are made available to educate women about the different types of violence and informing them of their rights to live without violence.

All information distributed, such as those seen in Appendix A, contains basic language, along with visual imagery, that can be understood by even those with limited

literacy. In 2008 a series of very powerful and culturally appropriate images were used to commemorate victims of violence of all ages in Honduras (see Appendix C).

The Copaneca Women's Center offers a safe place for women to meet and network. However, given the isolation of most abused women, who are often not able to leave their neighborhoods, social workers try to establish and support self-help networks within the different neighborhoods. Such networking is crucial for getting information out to women that would otherwise not have access to it.

One of the most important events hosted by the Governor of the Municipality through the Copaneca Women's Center in 2006 was a Public Forum to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8. This event brought together a series of women speakers that ranged from the Governor herself, to lawyers and health care providers to survivors of domestic violence. This Public Forum sent an important message to the community that women are beginning to challenge the patriarchal system of government and decision-making regarding women's rights.

4.3 Local Efforts

Given the nature of domestic violence, with its social stigma, I was not sure if looking at domestic violence in Honduras would be a viable project, especially in a community that I was not familiar with. Before leaving for Honduras I did extensive research about violence against women, looking for local resources and contacts. First and foremost I noticed that most of the resources are located in the capital, Tegucigalpa, which is a 6-hour drive from Santa Rosa de Copán. I was sure there would be local initiatives; I just had to find them once I arrived. To my surprise finding resources turned out to be easier than I had hoped. Upon arrival in Santa Rosa the group was housed with local families and I just happened to be placed with a doctor who worked in the Public Health Regional Office. My first thought was that the Public Health Regional Office

was the perfect place to inquire about domestic violence in the area. The very next day I was given a tour of the Office and put in contact with a network of people working in different capacities who do the very work that I was interested in learning about. (see Table 15 below).

4.3.1. Initiatives, Resources and Networking: Research and Data Collection On-Site in Honduras from 2006 to 2011.³⁷

In Figure 8 I have mapped out the network that I was able to establish and maintain throughout my research. My first contact was Dr. Oscar Aguilar, who is a doctor at the Public Health Regional Office in Santa Rosa de Copán. Dr. Aguilar then introduced me to one of his co-workers, Keyla Mejía, the regional psychologist, who works extensively with intrafamily violence throughout the region. Next I met a regional social worker, Exely Santos, works exclusively with women affected by domestic violence and collaborates closely with Kayla Mejía. Exely works out of the largest Health Center in Santa Rosa, the Vicente Fernando Mejía Health Center, as well as in the field conducting home visits and networking with women affected by violence along with volunteers Dr. Oscar Ayala and Anita Moya. In 2006 the Public Health Regional Office and the Vicente Fernando Mejía Health Center were working very closely with the *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca* (Copaneca Women's Center) on a number of awareness projects and events that were centered around informing women, and the entire community, about the right to live without violence.

³⁷ Information pertaining to Honduras was gathered during five on-site visits through a network of community leaders and women affected by violence. The first two visits consisted of networking within the community to identify and meet with organizations and people that work directly and indirectly with violence against women. Once the groundwork was laid through networking, the second phase was to meet and talk directly with victims of domestic violence, which was done during the third visit in 2008. A certain amount of trust was established throughout the 6-year long networking within the community, which facilitated the direct contact with six current victims of violence and one former victim. Each one of these women wanted to tell her story, which for several of them was the first step to acknowledging their desires to overcome the violence in their lives.

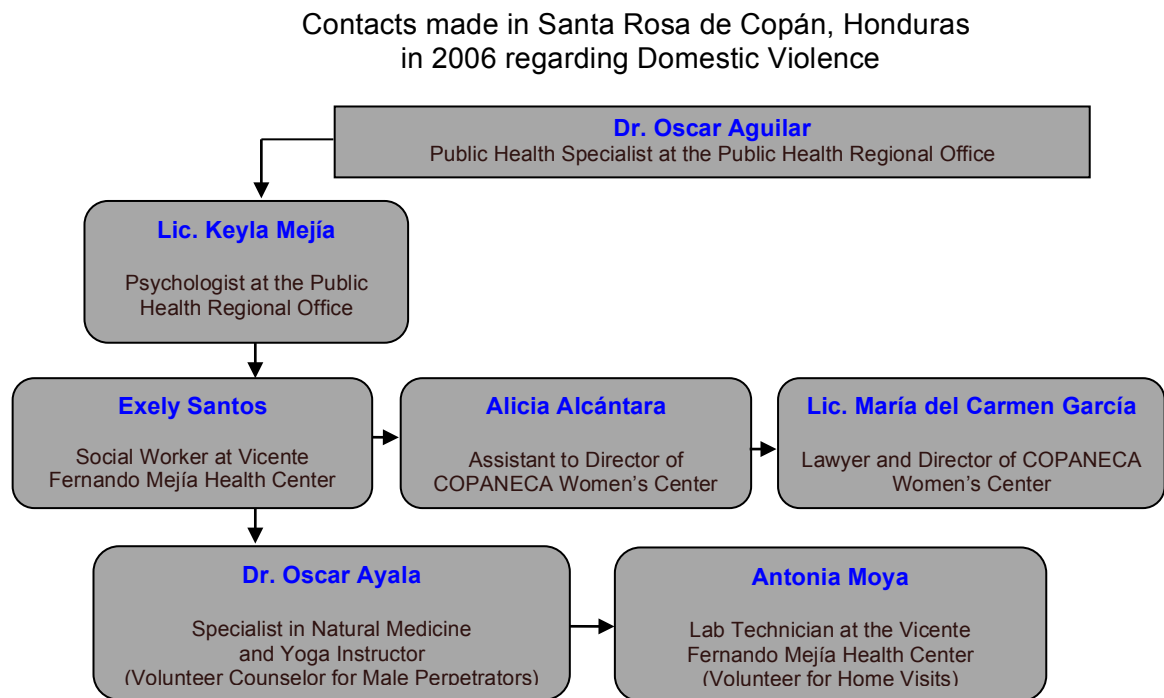


Figure 8: Beginning to Network in Santa Rosa de Copán

This network realized that in order to eradicate violence against women there needed to be social change, and men's participation was necessary. Therefore, the group decided to address this issue from the male perspective in addition to providing the education and advocacy given to women. One of the ways to directly reach out to men was to start with the perpetrators themselves. The Family Court system (especially certain women judges and lawyers) decided that perpetrators should be held responsible for their actions. One requirement imposed upon the perpetrators by many judges was to complete a series of individual and group counseling sessions. A doctor and a former victim of domestic violence, both of whom were well known within the community for their dedication to ending violence against women, led these sessions voluntarily.

Since 2006 there have been several awareness campaigns within the community of Santa Rosa de Copán. These campaigns range anywhere from making regular neighborhood visits and creating neighborhood networks to organizing community

events, distributing pamphlets and booklets to collaboration with community leaders and organizers. Some of these efforts included planned events on March 8th, *el Día Internacional de la Mujer* [International Women's Day]. Events included public presentations by community leaders and experts in the field. Posters, pamphlets and purple ribbons were distributed during events to raise awareness. A compelling Spanish movie,³⁸ about one woman's struggle as a victim of violence, was shown to the public in an effort to sensitize the community. There were also various types of media coverage of events, such as news clips, newspaper articles, and public service. In fact, in 2006 and 2007 several students and I had the opportunity to participate in some of these activities since the service-learning groups happened to be in Santa Rosa on March 8th.

Photo 16 below captures the preparations being carried out by staff of the *Casa de la Mujer Copaneca*. Photo 17 shows some of audience members of the Public Forum commemorating International's Women's Day on March 8, 2006, which had a huge public audience in attendance, filling the auditorium.

³⁸ cf. Take My Eyes (2003), "Te doy mis ojos" (original title) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0350193/>

Día Internacional de la Mujer

March 8, 2006

Preparations being made at the COPANECA Women's Center for a Public Forum to celebrate International Women's Day.



Photo 16: Preparations for the *Día Internacional de la Mujer* [International Women's Day].



Photo 17: Audience and presenter, 2006 Governor of the Department of Copán, Sonia Medina at a Public Forum, *Día Internacional de la Mujer* [International Women's Day], March 8, 2006.

Photo 18 is a collage of newspapers carrying news about the previous day's activities for International Women's Day. International Women's Day and women's demonstrating for justice were front-page news throughout the country. International Women's Day is celebrated throughout the country, but especially in the larger cities.



Photo 18: *Día Internacional de la Mujer* [International Women's Day] and domestic violence in the news, March 9, 2006.

Photos 19 and 20 show the outreach and networking undertaken by service-learning students in an effort to meet community members. This particular group is doing outreach to AIDS and HIV patients and their families.

4.3.2. Outreach and Networking



Photo 19: Footpath to outlying neighborhood doing outreach and networking.



Photo 20: Service-learning student with outreach volunteers and community member.



Photo 21: Women gathered for a domestic violence informational session.



Photo 22: Informing and educating women about domestic violence and women's rights.

Photos 21 and 22, above, illustrate efforts to bring neighborhood women together for informational sessions in 2008. These sessions took place in the neighborhood school in the morning and afternoon, which was a safe meeting place for the women because they drop their child off in the classroom and attend these brief informational sessions before returning home. Abusers and their family members often control women by restricting their freedom of movement.



Photo 23: Women from *Barrio Los Angeles*.

I met the three women in photo 23 above in the neighborhood of *Barrio Los Angeles*³⁹ in 2008. I found these women to very strong despite being subjected to extreme abuse. These women have established a neighborhood support network with the help of a Social Worker and international volunteers. They have been meeting with a social worker every two weeks and support one another through the support network. This is one of the first successful neighborhood networking groups formed through the assistance of a social worker. This group is meant to empower the women by bringing

³⁹ Barrio Los Angeles is situated in the outskirts of the city, near the prison, and is considered one of the more dangerous areas. Needless to say, I did not go there alone... always during the day and accompanied by locals that work in the area.

them together to support one another in the times of need. At the time I met the group they had been meeting for over a year, creating a supportive network for women throughout the neighborhood.

These women have intervened several times over the past year to help support and come to the aid of women who have been abused. They attend to the women's emotional and physical needs by having their doors open so women can talk, caring for the victim, transporting the victim to seek medical care, etc.

During my discussions with the social worker, I learned that this group has been very successful in empowering the neighborhood women; however, the dynamics of this group was also creating another problem that needed to be addressed. Apparently some of the battered women had begun using violence to combat violence, striking back when they were physically abused. This situation, of women feeling physically empowered, could have serious implications of escalated violence and the risk of death for the woman, or the death of the abuser, which would create serious legal and social issues for the woman and her family.

The social worker identified this physical aggression on the part of the women through regular visits and meeting with the community network of women. Violence is not resolved with more violence... it makes it worse.

4.3.3. *Casa Hogar* [Women's Shelter Safe House]

In the beginning *Casa Hogar* [Women's Shelter] was a just a dream, then it became a plan and today it has become a reality. Although the informational services were an important resource in raising awareness about women suffering domestic violence, the community was in desperate need of a place where women can go with their children to be safe. This was just a dream for many years; however, in 2006 it was becoming a reality for the women of Santa Rosa de Copán. A coalition, headed by

CAMO (Central American Medical Outreach, Inc.)⁴⁰ its founder and CEO Kathy Tschiegg, RN, was formed to collect data and document cases of domestic violence within the community in their quest to find local, national and international funding to build a safe house called *Casa Hogar*,⁴¹ where women can seek immediate and/or long-term refuge from the abuser.

Finally in 2010⁴² the *Casa Hogar*⁴³ was completed and inaugurated by the community leaders. Prior to 2010, the only recourse for women in danger was to turn to family, friends, or neighbors for refuge, which drastically reduced their chances of leaving the abuser for more than a few hours or days.



Photo 24: *Casa Hogar* sits atop a hill overlooking Santa Rosa de Copán, May 2011.

Casa Hogar became a reality, starting out as an idea, through the fundraising and planning phase to its final construction, after many years and under the auspice of several

⁴⁰ <http://www.camo.org/>

⁴¹ http://santarosacopan.org/uploads/media/Casa_Hogar.pdf

⁴² On May 17, 2010 CAMO completed construction of the largest shelter for abused women in Central and South America.

⁴³ cf. *Casa Hogar* of Santa Rosa de Copán for a look inside the building. <http://youtu.be/hEAEhYaSak>

mayors. On April 30, 2005 Juan Carlos Elvir,⁴⁴ (Mayor of Santa Rosa in 2005), asked Kathy Tschiegg of CAMO to help the community do something about what he described as “my greatest problem in Santa Rosa... domestic violence.” He said, “If you want to do something for us, help us with the domestic violence.” (CAMO).

That same year, in May 2005, CAMO began to investigate shelters of domestic violence and the different models that had been successful. (CAMO). In 2007 the new mayor, Juan Manuel Bueso,⁴⁵ donated land to CAMO to start the construction of the shelter. (CAMO).

Twenty to thirty men worked daily for 15 months in the construction of the refuge. This women's shelter is the largest in Latin America. It was the effort of many that made this project possible. Exactly five years later, on April 30, 2010, the ribbon was cut to open this shelter. (CAMO).

Casa Hogar sits on a hill overlooking Santa Rosa and its community.⁴⁶ The shelter is capable of housing (by USA standards) 44 people, (by developing country standards) over 100 individuals at a time. (CAMO).

Through CAMO’s work with the shelter, *Casa Hogar* provides a safe place for women and their children to stay. CAMO also provides legal counsel and teaches vocational training to domestic violence victims who lack resources or a place to turn. (CAMO, 2012).⁴⁷

CAMO has been involved since the conception of the women’s shelter [*Casa Hogar*] and the trade school. CAMO provided 90% of the funds towards completing the

⁴⁴ Juan Carlos Elvir served on the planning committee during the construction of the *Casa Hogar*.

⁴⁵ Juan Manuel Bueso served on the planning committee during the construction of the *Casa Hogar*.

⁴⁶ cf. *Casa Hogar* de Santa Rosa de Copán, February 24, 2012 - Uploaded by Norlandoh
<http://youtu.be/hEAEhYaSak>

⁴⁷ cf. CAMO Women's Shelter in Honduras serves domestic violence victims – CAMO, August 7, 2008 -
Uploaded by camousa <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ3lv1STVQY>

woman's shelter - \$340,000, and is currently presiding over the board. Through the trade school CAMO helps supply the necessary equipment for carpentry, sewing, welding and cosmetology. With the recent construction of the women's shelter, an adjoining door has been opened to the trade school so women have direct access to the trade school without having to leave the safety of the shelter. This combination of safety and training allows women a chance to escape domestic violence and prepare themselves for a future without violence. (CAMO, 2012).

The community of Santa Rosa regularly donates food for these women and their children, demonstrating local support for the cause. Individuals have formed a local community group, whose members are committed to doing their part to combat violence against women, to take turns every Sunday morning collecting fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as any other food or supplies people wish to donate, at the *Feria del Agricultor* [farmers market] and deliver them to the *Casa Hogar* for its current residents. (CAMO, 2012).



Photo 25: Entrance to *Casa Hogar*, May 2011.

Casa Hogar is a solid structure with only one way in and one way out. What looks like windows, in the photo above, are actually painted on the façade to look like real windows. For safety reasons the Hogar has no exterior windows.



Photo 26: Indoor Patio at *Casa Hogar* (Source: www.camo.com)

Casa Hogar has an open-air patio in the middle of the building. The open-air patio space gives residents access to fresh air and sunshine without the risks of venturing outside.



Photo 27: 24/7 security and surveillance outside *Casa Hogar*, May 2011.

Casa Hogar has 24/7 security inside and outside the building. There are two sets of doors to pass through in order to access or leave the building. These doors are constantly monitored by an outside and inside camera system. Military officers do the outside security, and the inside is secured by female police officers. No man is allowed inside the building at all. Male children under 5 years old can stay with their mothers at the *Casa Hogar*.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHOD

Interviewing the community members was an integral part of the research. Although it took several years of networking, each year took me closer to achieving it. During the 6 years of my research I interviewed victims, families, and friends touched by domestic violence; as well as doctors, nurses, mental health and healthcare providers, social workers, NGO administrators, lawyers, community members, a Family Court judge, and the 2011 Mayor and the 2011 Governor of Santa Rosa de Copán.

In preparation for the interviews, a series of questions was formulated. As can be noted in the two different sets of questions below, the types of interviewees ranged from a variety of community members to the victims of violence themselves. The interviews occurred throughout the 6-year period of research. The interviewing sequences were irregular and often depended upon networking; as well as the availability of interviewees.

5.1. Interview Questions for Community Members

The interview questions for members of the community were the following:

¿Qué me puede decir acerca de la prevalencia de la violencia doméstica en Santa Rosa de Copán?	What can you tell me about the prevalence of domestic violence in Santa Rosa de Copán?
¿Qué servicios están disponibles en la comunidad para las víctimas de violencia doméstica?	What services are available within the community for victims of domestic violence?
¿Cómo hacen en Santa Rosa de Copán para concienciar la comunidad acerca de la violencia doméstica?	What does domestic violence awareness look like in Santa Rosa de Copán?
¿Quién provee los servicios para mujeres maltratadas de Santa Rosa de Copán y sus alrededores?	Who provides services for abused women of Santa Rosa de Copán and surrounding areas?
¿Cómo es que se distribuyen la información acerca de los servicios a las víctimas de la violencia?	How is information about services offered to victims of violence distributed?

¿Qué tipo de programación se realiza para ayudar a las mujeres poner fin al ciclo de violencia para ellos y sus familias?

What kind of programming is done to help women end the cycle of violence for them and their families?

¿Tiene algún datos sobre casos o situaciones de violencia doméstica?

Do you have any data regarding cases or instances of domestic violence?

5.2 Interview Questions for Women Affected by Domestic Violence

The Interview questions for victims (the names of the victims have been changed in order to protect their privacy and to keep them safe) of domestic violence were the following:

¿Cuál es su nombre?

What is your name?

¿Qué edad tiene?

How old are you?

¿Cuántos hijos tiene?

How many children do you have?

¿Cuánto tiempo ha estado con su marido?

How long have you been with your husband?

¿Cuándo comenzó el abuso?

When did the abuse begin?

¿Qué tipo de abuso se ha sometido?

What kind of abuse are you subjected to?

¿Me puede hablar del abuso?

Can you tell me about the abuse?

¿Con qué frecuencia hay abuso?

How often does the abuse happen?

¿Cuándo le abusa?

When does he abuse you?

¿Cómo es el abuso? ¿Qué pasa cuando su marido se enfada?

How does he abuse you? What happens when your husband gets angry?

¿Tiene usted un trabajo?

Do you have a job?

¿De dónde es?

Where are you from?

¿Tiene familia?

Do you have family?

¿Tiene/recibe apoyo de su familia?

Does your family support or help you?

¿Cuándo busco ayuda por primera vez?

When did you seek help for the first time?

¿Dónde buscó ayuda/apoyo?	Where did you seek help?
¿Qué pasa cuando su marido le abusa?	What happens when your husband abuses you?
¿Dónde le abusa, en casa o en público?	Where does he abuse you, at home or in public?
¿Están los hijos presentes cuando le abusa?	Are your children present when you are abused?
¿Hay violencia en la familia - violencia contra los hijos y otros miembros de la familia?	Is there family violence - violence against your children or other members of the family?
¿Qué hacen su familia, sus amigos y vecinos cuando le pega?	What do family members, friends and neighbors do when he hits you?
¿Se siente en peligro? Y sus hijos?	Do you feel unsafe or in danger? And do your children?
¿Qué quiere hacer con su vida?	What would you like to do in life?

5.3. Creating Social Change

Education and information regarding domestic violence is absolutely necessary for women. This is something that not only the country needs, but it is something the women want desperately. Without education for women, and the community, about their rights and obligations, as well as available resources for help and support, Honduras will be far from achieving social change regarding the rights of its vulnerable women.

Overall, the majority of women find themselves in a situation with little to no support from the community and feel trapped with no way out. Most of these women suffer all types of violence, and for lack of education and information they cannot get out from under the heavy weight of violence imposed upon them. However, those that are informed and could possibly break free from the chains of violence have many reasons for not going through with it.

The list below contains actual quotes acquired through talking with women subjected to abuse in Santa Rosa de Copán. Therefore, the quotes are presented in the original language of Spanish and then translated into English. These actual quotes are comparable to the myth where people believe that **“if the victim didn’t like it, she would leave.”** (see Appendix A).

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. No quiero que mis hijos pierdan su padre. | 1. I don’t want my children to lose their father. |
| 2. Me quedo sin casa. | 2. I will be left without a house. |
| 3. El me va a quitar mis hijos. | 3. He will take my children away. |
| 4. Tengo miedo que me mate. | 4. I’m afraid he’ll kill me. |
| 5. Si pongo una denuncia mi esposo me va a dejar. | 5. If I file a complaint my husband will leave me. |
| 6. No puedo encontrar trabajo. | 6. I can’t find work. |
| 7. No tengo quien cuide a mis hijos. | 7. I have no one to care of my children. |
| 8. El me dijo que se va a matar si lo dejo. | 8. He told me he would kill me if I left him. |
| 9. No quiero otro padre para mis hijos. | 9. I don’t want my children to have another father. |
| 10. El es muy buen padre. | 10. He is a good father. |
| 11. Me dijo que quiere cambiar. | 11. He told me he wants to change. |
| 12. Me dijo que va a cambiar. | 12. He told me he is going to change. |
| 13. Solamente si no tomara. Cuando no toma no me pega. | 13. If only he didn’t drink. He doesn’t hit me when he’s not drinking. |
| 14. El fue abusado cuando era niño. | 14. He was abused when he was a child. |
| 15. Su padre siempre abusó de su madre, y es por eso que lo hace. | 15. His father always abused his mother, and that’s why he does it. |
| 16. Lo quiero. | 16. I love him. |

- | | |
|---|---|
| 17. Lo quiero todavía, aunque no de la misma forma. El me ha hecho mucho daño pero nunca me falta el dinero cuando lo necesito. | 17. I still love him, although not the same way. He has hurt me a lot but I always have money when I need it. |
| 18. Ahora cuando el me quiere pegar no lo dejo. | 18. Now when he tries to hit me I don't let him. |
| 19. Es difícil encontrar trabajo. | 19. It's difficult to find work. |
| 20. No tengo suficiente educación para encontrar un buen trabajo. | 20. I don't have enough education to find a good job. |
| 21. No sé que hacer, ni cómo hacer para poner una denuncia. | 21. I don't know what to do, or how to file a complaint. |
| 22. Su familia me ha amenazado. | 22. His family has threatened me. |
| 23. No tengo a nadie con quien pueda hablar. | 23. I don't have anyone to talk to. |

Throughout the six years of my research in Honduras, I was able to talk with a variety of community members, establishing a significant network within the community of Santa Rosa de Copán. However, there were two influential and essential people within the community, whom I had not spoken with until the opportunity arose in 2011. I had interviewed a variety of people from different socio-economic levels, occupations, professions, and political views, but my research was incomplete without the views and opinions of the community leaders. They were the Mayor of the city of Santa Rosa de Copán and the Governor of the Department of Copán. I was very interested in speaking with local leaders to hear their positions on domestic violence. I wanted to know if there was an awareness of the domestic violence issues within the higher echelons of the community. Did they acknowledge a problem existed? If so, what had been done to address it, what was being done currently, what still needed to be done, was there a plan or strategy to address domestic violence; and, if so, how could it be accomplished? I called the Mayor's office and got an appointment for the very next day. Eventually I

interviewed the Governor as well and the two interviews gave a telling perspective of the community's future. After all, these were the two most influential people in the community, men whose jobs are to guide and lead their communities toward a better future. Below is a brief summary of these interviews.

5.3.1 Conversation with the Mayor of Santa Rosa de Copán: Anibal Erazo Alvarado⁴⁸

As we enter the waiting room, the volume of a television in the corner of the waiting room, a vast area that could have seated 15 to 20 visitors, instantly hit us. However, we were received right away and weren't in the waiting room for long. We were escorted into a luxurious office and over to a huge conference table. Behind the table was an imposing desk where the mayor sat talking on the phone. After about 5 minutes or so the mayor came over and sat down opposite my fellow classmates and me.

Although this was my sixth year in Honduras doing research for my thesis, my fellow classmates were young, first-time service-learning undergraduates learning their way around the community and getting to know its people. These students were excited to be meeting the mayor and anxious to converse with him face-to-face using their intermediate Spanish, having already prepared a list of questions. As I posed what I thought would be a good initial question regarding the prevalence of domestic violence in the city, we were met with an immediate and abrupt "*No hay aquí.*" ["We don't have that here."]. I reformulated the question only to hear the mayor say; "*No, es que no tenemos este problema aquí. Esto no es un problema para nosotros aquí en Santa Rosa.*" ["No it's that we don't have that problem here. That's not a problem for us here in Santa Rosa."]. I decided to redirect my question from the prevalence of domestic violence to

⁴⁸ Information and data retrieved from a personal interview with the Mayor of Santa Rosa de Copán, Anibal Erazo Alvarado during on-site in May 2011.

what is done when domestic violence complaints are made. To that question he replied; *“No hay violencia doméstica en los hogares; solamente hay ‘desacuerdos’ entre la pareja.”* [“There is no domestic violence in the homes; there are only “disagreements” between the couple.”]. To which I followed up by asking what happens when there are “disagreements” that are brought to the attention of the court, or complaints from women being abused by their husbands. We were basically informed that domestic violence did NOT exist and if a couple goes before the judge because of these “disagreements,” they are counseled and sent home to work things out. And that was it. So, basically, as noted by UNFPA,

Victims of domestic violence in Honduras, as in many other countries, were told that they should resolve the dispute on their own, that their plight was a matter between husband and wife, boyfriend and girlfriend, and should be confined to the privacy of their homes. Even after the law was established, victims of domestic violence often found little support from police.⁴⁹ (UNFPA).

At that point I decided to change my approach by indicating that violence does not happen only between men and women, but also within same sex couples, and asked him to talk to us about that, because I was obviously getting nowhere with violence against women by their male partner. However, that was absolutely the worst direction our conversation could have taken. The mayor’s voice became very firm as he immediately affirmed; *“Esto si que no hay aquí, No tenemos estos tipos de personas ni aquí, ni en el país. Qué va, ni hablemos de esto.”* [“We don’t have that here. We don’t have those kinds of people here, or in the country. No way, I don’t even want to talk about it.”]

⁴⁹Retrieved April 23, 2012 from: <http://www.unfpa.org/public/op/edit/News/pid/2161>

Obviously going nowhere with this line of questioning, I informed the mayor that I had been doing research and collecting information over the past few years and had prior knowledge and evidence of domestic violence within the community. I explained to him that I was collecting information and statistics for my thesis and that I wanted input from officials and influential people in the community such as himself. The mayor stated that “*Eso no hay aquí en el **casco central** /casco **histórico***⁵⁰ *de Santa Rosa y eso se refleja en los **datos oficiales**.*” [“We don’t have that here in **historic downtown**¹² Santa Rosa and that is reflected in the **official data**.”]. He continued by saying that there is some violence on the outskirts of the city and beyond, but that doesn’t count because it is not part of the downtown area. When I asked if he had any reports or documentation for me to reference, the mayor became quite firm and indicated he would not give out any figures or data because he didn’t want anything published that would reflect badly on his city...because there is absolutely no violence within the downtown area. I then mentioned that I was aware of the *Casa de la Mujer Copaneca* and asked him what kinds of services were provided by this entity. The Mayor was becoming impatient with the *gringas* and their questions, so in an attempt to redirect the interview he offered to draft a letter from his office authorizing us to visit the *Casa de la Mujer Copaneca* and speak with the director. What escaped the Mayor’s attention is that I had already told him that in past years I had spoken with the previous director of the *Casa de la Mujer Copaneca*... it was obvious he just wanted to get us out of his office. We were instructed to wait outside in the waiting room while his secretary drafted the letter for him to sign, for which I kindly thanked him and we promptly exited his office.

⁵⁰ The **casco central** / **casco histórico** consists of an area of a few blocks that extend outward from the central plaza of the city. This area is only a very small portion of the city that consists of government buildings, banks, police department, commercial buildings, and professional offices but has relatively few housing structures. The majority of the population that lives in Santa Rosa lives outside that area in different neighborhoods. It is in these neighborhoods that violence against women runs rampant, but is not taken into account in the **official data**.

Once outside in the waiting room, a wave of sudden disbelief hit the students. After a minute of complete and total silence, I looked toward the shocked and stunned faces trying to make sense of what had happened. Not knowing exactly what to say, I finally broke the silence by asking the students if they understood what was said. At which point, several inquisitive voices began: “Did he just say...?” “Did you hear that?” “I can’t believe he just said that.” “Does he think we are stupid?” Once again silence came over us as we sat there contemplating our surroundings.

Our attention was drawn to the television and realizing, after a few minutes, it was repeatedly and continually spewing out video taped campaign ads of the mayor. The odd thing was that these were old campaign ads, which the Mayor used to get elected the previous year when he was running for office, playing over and over again to the people in the waiting room. After about 20 minutes of waiting we were given the letter and promptly departed.

Although it was quite unclear to us *gringas*⁵¹ (who were only looking for information and data) whether or not the current Mayor, **Anibal Erazo Alvarado**,⁵² supports the idea of helping women affected by domestic violence within his community, there have been two previous male Mayors, one in 2005 (**Juan Carlos Elvir Martel**)⁵³ and the other in 2007 (**Juan Manuel Bueso Fiallos**),⁵⁴ who wholeheartedly supported these efforts.

⁵¹ The word “gringas,” meaning American women, was used by the Mayor when referring to the students he met with. This word had an uncomfortable undertone the way it was used to refer to us as outsiders.

⁵² Elected Mayor of Santa Rosa de Copán in 2010. Student interview with the Mayor was in May of 2011.

⁵³ On April 30, 2005 Juan Carlos Elvir, Mayor of Santa Rosa, asked Kathy Tschiegg of CAMO to help the community do something about their what he described as “my greatest problem in Santa Rosa... domestic violence.” He said, “If you want to do something for us, help us with the domestic violence.” (CAMO). Engineer Juan Carlos Elvir was elected Mayor in 1998 and held the post for 2 terms.

⁵⁴ In 2007, the Mayor Juan Manuel Bueso donated land to CAMO to start the construction of the shelter. (CAMO). Licenciado Juan Manuel Bueso was elected Mayor in 2006.

Once outside we regrouped to debrief. I had never seen students that emotional about a topic, and someone suggested that we go straight to the Governor's office to try to meet with him even without an appointment. Luckily the Governor's office was just around the corner. So with emotions still high, we proceeded to the Governor's office.

5.3.2. Conversation with the Governor of the Department of Copán: Juan Carlos Lagos⁵⁵

Honduras is divided into 18 departments and each department has a departmental head or capital. The president of the republic appoints a governor for each department. Department of Copán has an estimated population of 288,766, according to the 2001 census.⁵⁶ Out of the 18 departments, Copán holds 8th place in total population; however, the human development index of Copán is one of the lowest in the country, coming in slightly ahead of its neighboring department of Lempira.⁵⁷

The interview with the Governor was completely different from the one we had just had with the Mayor. First of all, we just showed up at his office and were cordially and warmly met by the Governor himself. He was much more approachable and informal during our interview. He did not seem to be defensive at all, unlike the Mayor, and welcomed our questions with the upmost tact, but honestly and factually. We did not feel rushed as we did with the Mayor. According to Governor Lagos, only 2% of the national budget is assigned to combat violence against women. Moreover, this 2% is allocated only because the federal government mandates it. He took us through the entire process of how this budget is allocated, explaining that the allocation is not nearly enough to fund any type of reasonably effective domestic violence initiatives or

⁵⁵ Information and data retrieved from a personal interview with the Governor of the Department of Copán, Juan Carlos Lagos while I was in Honduras in May 2011.

⁵⁶ 2001 Census <http://www.ine-hn.org/censo2001/p19.pdf>

⁵⁷ 2006 Human Development of Honduras <http://www.undp.un.hn/INDH2006/descargas/mapas.pdf>

programming in the communities. In fact, there is barely enough to set up and staff an office in the communities. Each office needs to have at least one lawyer on staff to handle domestic violence advocacy and education. As an example the Governor explained that after all the costs of establishing and maintaining an office, very little of budget is left for awareness and educational programming. This 2% of the national budget is supposed to have a trickle-down effect throughout the country, but it is clearly not enough when I asked the Governor what it would take to change how the funding is done and how more funds could be allocated, his response was that it is impossible to change. There would have to be complete social change for this to happen and he didn't see that happening any time soon. The Governor confided to us his disappointment in the system and desire to make positive changes to help women suffering violence. The one thing that he said he could do is to deny men who come to him looking for their community service obligations to be commuted, which he said happens on a daily basis. The Governor hopes that the embarrassment of community services imposed by the court upon offenders/perpetrators of violence against women; such as sweeping floors, picking up trash, cleaning the park, will make those men consider their future actions.⁵⁸

In fact, the Governor's office began vigorously supporting the fight against domestic violence when **Sonia Medina de Alvarado**⁵⁹ was elected Governor in 2002. It was *Licenciada* Sonia Medina, who jointly hosted, with the *Casa de la Mujer Copaneca*,

⁵⁸ The interviews with the Mayor and the Governor were completely different in many aspects. The Mayor grew up poor and has a 3rd grade education, whereas the Governor is a lawyer and comes from a well-known and respected family within the community. The Mayor was consumed by a sense of machismo, formality, political rhetoric, intimidating tone and posture, while the Governor engaged in a casual communication with honest statements, consistent and concrete data, factual and analytic information. It is also important to note that the Governor and the Mayor are from opposing political parties. The current governing political party of the country is the same political party as the Governor's. Although the Governor is critical of his party, the President of Honduras nevertheless appointed him Governor.

⁵⁹ *Licenciada* Sonia Medina de Alvarado was Governor of the Department of Copán from 2002 to 2006.

the domestic violence awareness campaign on International Women's Day, March 8, 2006 through the *Casa de la Mujer Copaneca*.

5.3.3. Student Reaction to interviews with the Mayor and the Governor

During the regular check-in after the interviews with the Mayor and the Governor, the students who were present at the meetings were anxious to share what they had learned from this experience. One student was so outraged that she made the following entry in her journal:

What I Learned!!!

I learned that there are **no homosexuals living in Santa Rosa de Copán**. I also learned that the Mayor [of Santa Rosa] is a homophobic fanatic that disables women.

I learned that the Governor of Copán Department [sic] recognizes and understands the inequalities of the sexes, and that this is so intertwined with the complexities of the culture of Honduras that separation is not possible without a change in mentality and education.

~ Maria Biasin [Service-Learning Student 2011]

Although the governor revealed information that confirmed information previously acquired from other community leaders and not what we heard from the Mayor, this was the opportunity to ask a series of questions that could not be answered in the past by other sources. The governor indicated that he frequently receives requests from men assigned to do community service to absolve their sentencing. The Law Against Domestic Violence in Honduras prescribes community service for perpetrators of domestic violence who do not comply with the protection measures imposed by the court and who reoffend. Non-compliance with protection measures and reoffending is a crime. Therefore, if the victim reports violence again, the judge hands down punishment in the form of community service. This community service is coordinated through the city/town hall and includes work assignments that are not related to the profession or

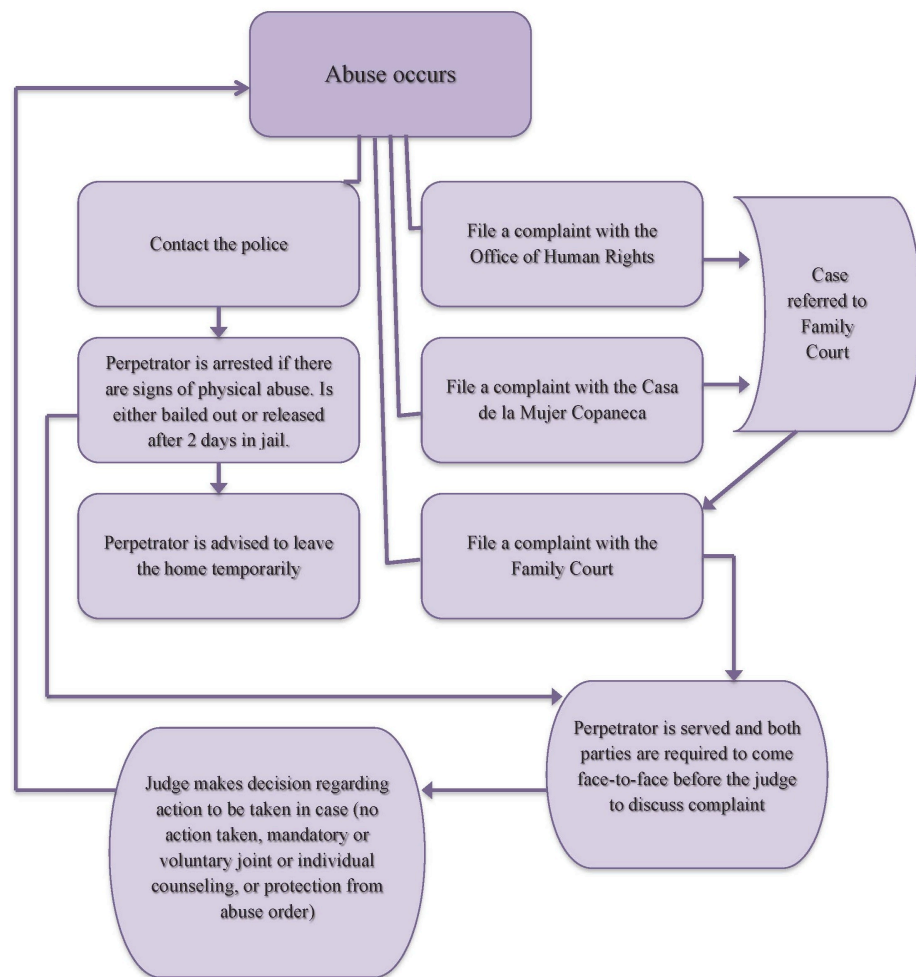
work of the aggressor. This decision for community service is made in order to send a message to the community that the community does not approve, nor consent to, any type of violence because those who commit abuse have to confront the consequences. (Versión popular de La Ley Contra la Violencia Doméstica, Marzo, 1999).⁶⁰

Community service consists of working for four hours per day for an established or pre-determined period of time, without help from others. Community service can be ordered for periods of a minimum of three months to a maximum of one year, such as: Sweeping the central plaza/square, sweeping floors of public buildings, cleaning up trash, etc.⁶¹

Therefore, in order for these sanctions to be enforced and carried out, there needs to be collaboration and insistence from the victim, as well as support from the mayor and governor's offices and all other institutions committed to the eradication of violence. This process may sound simple. However, there are considerable dynamics that play a huge part in how, when, and if these sanctions are adhered to and actually carried out. The figure below demonstrates how difficult it can be for victims to find justice.

⁶⁰ The popular version of The Law Against Domestic Violence, March 1999, is a grade-school level book with simple explanations and drawings about the law, women's rights and resources in Honduras. These books were part of a campaign to inform, educate and combat violence against women.

⁶¹ Information retrieved from personal interview with the Governor of Copán Department.



(Source: Family Court, *Casa de la Mujer Copaneca*, Santa Rosa de Copán, 2006-2009)

Figure 9: Navigating Justice in the Department of Copán

CHAPTER 6: FACES OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE⁶²

My quest to learn about domestic violence and its prevalence in Honduras was a questionable and doubtful endeavor. Given the danger and stigma regarding domestic violence for women in Honduras, I held little hope of being accepted by the community, and especially by the victims of violence. However, right from the beginning of my first on-site, I have been amazed by the willingness of most people to talk with and educate me about violence against women in their community, as well as the strength and determination of the victims. The first doors opened to me were those of community advocates and leaders, NGOs and mental health and social work professionals, which quickly opened more doors along the way. I have had the opportunity to speak with and informally interview many women, listen to their stories and contemplate their sadness and the constant danger they are exposed to at the hands of their aggressors. (Note: The names of the following women have been changed in order to protect their identity.)

⁶² The names of these victims have been changed and their photos have been distorted to protect their identity and privacy, as well as their safety and that of their families.

Daniela⁶³ is 24 years old and has been in a domestic relationship with Juan Antonio, 30 years old, and they have 2 daughters together. Besides physical abuse, Daniela suffers from a type of total control abuse. She does not have keys to the house, does not have a telephone, cannot leave the house to shop and has to work in her husband's store. Daniela's husband never gives her money, she cannot visit her family and her family cannot come visit her and her daughters because of her husband's behavior. Daniela is totally isolated from the world by her husband.



Photo 28: Daniela and her daughters.

⁶³ The names of the victims identified in this thesis are not their real names.

Alicia⁶⁴ is 25 years old and has been in a domestic relationship for the past 11 years with Luis, with whom she has 2 sons. Alicia had to talk with me in her son's school because her husband does not let her go out of the house, and when she does go out to take her children to school her time is controlled. The abuse started after they had been together for 6 years and the physical abuse occurs when he is *bolo*.⁶⁵

Alicia filed a complaint against her husband a few months ago, which resulted in the judge imposing several conditions upon Alicia's husband. He was ordered to stop drinking, go to AA (alcoholics anonymous) meetings, and see a psychologist on a regular basis. In the past Alicia has filed four complaints against her husband, but he did not abide by the conditions imposed upon him. However, this time he has complied with the conditions for at least a month, but only time will tell if this latest attempt by Alicia to live a violence free life for her and her children will have a lasting effect on her husband. Hopefully, this time the situation will change for Alicia and her two children.



Photo 29: Alicia.

⁶⁴ The names of the victims identified in this thesis are not their real names.

⁶⁵ "*bolo*" is a commonly used word in Honduras meaning "*borracho*" or drunk.

Veronica⁶⁶ is an elementary school director in Santa Rosa de Copán. She is highly educated and spent a considerable amount of time in Europe for specialized training. Veronica also works with disabled children, which requires working closely with the children's mothers in order to achieve positive results for these children. Disabled children, and even adults, are usually hidden away from the outside world, making any chance of developing educational and social skills impossible. However, Veronica is trying to change all that by bringing activity and learning opportunities into these children's lives.

Veronica has been a participant in the service-learning experiences from the year 2006, as a supporter of not only disabled children, but also of the mothers of these children, many of who have fallen under the violent hands of their husbands. Besides the "normal" reasons for incurring violence at the hands of partners, women who have a child with a disability are often blamed for having an abnormal child and this is just another reason/excuse to justify violence towards them. Veronica saw this happening to the other of the disabled children she worked with and was advocating for them in any way she could.

After seeing the UMaine Service-Learning group return year after year, in 2008 Veronica approached the group about talking with these women in an informational and educational capacity. Since the movements of these mothers [amount of time out of the house, where they went when they left the house, etc.] were also very controlled, Veronica decided to gather these women when they brought their children to school. There was a room set aside for this half hour informal presentation to these mothers. Getting the information out and informing/educating women has to be done in very creative form and formats.

⁶⁶ The names of the victims identified in this thesis are not their real names.

Then yet another surprising revelation from Veronica came in 2009. Veronica reached out to me as the unofficial head of the domestic violence group to recount her own struggle with domestic violence in her home. Once again in 2011, Veronica wanted to talk with someone about how bad the violence had gotten in her house, but now instead of her husband, she was enduring constant psychological abuse from her adult children [still living at home] regarding her choice to go move on, be happy and make a life for herself. Veronica talked with me in confidence because she knew that all contacts and all information would remain confidential. When I asked her why she didn't talk to someone close to her, or go to the Casa de la Mujer Copaneca [Copaneca Center for Women], her response was that since everyone knows everyone else, such information would not be confidential and she didn't want to take the risk. Her career could be irreparably damaged if the wrong people were to find out, not to mention the terrible personal embarrassment that she would have to endure. Seeking help through the community is just not a viable option for Veronica.



Photo 30: Veronica.

Anita⁶⁷ is a lab technician at a health center in Santa Rosa de Copán. Anita was one of my first contacts in Santa Rosa de Copán. In 2006 a small group of community members had formed and visited the outlying areas doing outreach to people suffering from HIV/AIDS. There is such a stigma within the community that people do not identify themselves nor do they seek medical attention until it is too late. This group visited people within the neighborhoods who they themselves had identified, offering understanding and information on how to take care of themselves and their families while “living with HIV/AIDS.”

During our conversations about my research, Anita recounted her nightmare with violence at the hands of her late husband. He was brutally violent toward her and her children. On many occasions he would beat her in the house and then drag her by the hair down the street of her neighborhood. Not one person ever intervened, no one dared to stand up and say what he was doing was wrong. Instead, women in the neighborhood would care for her after the fact. If her husband got too brutal and the neighbors feared for her life, they would call the police. However, nothing was ever really done to put a stop to all the violence and terrible abuse.

Anita remembers vividly, to this day, the horrible pain of being dragged down the street by the hair, her knees bleeding and hair being pulled out. Another very vivid memory was of one occasion, when he was ordered to stay away from the family and the house, her husband tried to burn the house down in an effort to kill her and the children. Since he was not allowed in the house, in the middle of the night he took a padlock and locked the door of the house from the outside, and then proceeded to set fire to the curtains. The house filled with fire and smoke, but the family could not get out of the house. Luckily, their screams woke up several neighbors, who then managed to save the

⁶⁷ The names of the victims identified in this thesis are not their real names.

family from a certain and cruel death. Anita's nightmare ended when her husband died in a traffic accident. He was drunk, driving erratically and went off over the edge of a cliff.

Today, some 16 years later, Anita has a healthy relationship with another man. However, Anita has made an independent life for herself becoming a laboratory technician, building her own home and living peacefully and happily. She confided in me that she now controls her own life and has learned to demand respect in her relationship with her significant other. Anita says she'll never marry again.



Photo 31: Anita with her granddaughter.

Natalia⁶⁸ is 29 years old and has been with Miguel for 15 years, but has only been married to him for 5 years. They have three children together. She has been abused for the last 8 years. Natalia suffers from physical and psychological abuse but not economic. Her husband is a good father to their children.



Photo 32: Natalia.

⁶⁸ The names of the victims identified in this thesis are not their real names.

Rosario⁶⁹ is 44 years old and has been married to Daniel for 25 years. They have 5 children, ages 17 to 23 years old. Rosario has been suffering from psychological and economic abuse for 17 years. Once her husband tried to hit her, but she would not let him hit her. The abuse is worse when he is *bolo*⁷⁰ and/or has a girlfriend.



Photo 33: Rosario.

⁶⁹ The names of the victims identified in this thesis are not their real names.

⁷⁰ Drunk.

Maria⁷¹ is 28 years old and has been married to José, 36 years old, for 13 years. They have 2 children, 8 and 12 years old. Maria suffers from a huge amount of physical and psychological abuse. Her husband hits her so hard that he has almost killed her on two occasions. She is very afraid of her husband and goes running to the house when she knows he's on his way home. She counts on her friends in the community network to be on the lookout and let her know when and from which direction he is coming home. Maria has to have dinner ready when her husband gets home. He abuses her a lot when she has a girlfriend.



Photo 34: Maria.

⁷¹ The names of the victims identified in this thesis are not their real names.

Reina⁷² has five children and is pregnant with her sixth child. She comes from the capital city of Tegucigalpa and was sent to the *Casa Hogar* by the *Instituto Nacional de la Mujer*, INAM/Honduras.⁷³ Reina was beaten so badly by her husband that she was hospitalized for more than a month and that was when INAM interceded by sending Reina out of the city to a safe place and placing her children in the care of others. While she was in the hospital she found out that she was pregnant. While Reina was in the hospital her husband didn't come to visit and she hasn't heard or seen him since.

Reina has been badly beaten, pushed and thrown around most of her life. Her family treated her badly, and violently, as well. She indicated that her sisters were jealous of her because she was prettier, which spawned hostile treatment at home from her siblings. Reina appears to have mental health issues.

Reina is severely depressed and cried a lot because she hasn't heard from her children and she misses them. Reina is very withdrawn from others, but finds some solace in playing with the children in the *Casa Hogar*.

Carmen⁷⁴ has two children; one is four years old and the other is an infant. She has been subject to severe physical and psychological violence. She has been beaten so severely that she has been hospitalized several times. Carmen suffers from extreme lack of self-confidence/self-esteem and is extremely withdrawn. She appears very nervous all the time and is very aware of her surroundings. Carmen appears to take care of her

⁷² The names of the victims identified in this thesis are not their real names.

⁷³ cf. INAM/Honduras - Instituto Nacional de la Mujer. <http://www.inam.gob.hn>. Somos una institución autónoma, de desarrollo social y con rango de Secretaría de Estado, con personería jurídica y patrimonio propio, responsable de formular, promover y coordinar la ejecución y seguimiento de la Política Nacional de la Mujer, así como los planes de acción que la ejecuten y la integración de la mujer al desarrollo sostenible. El Instituto Nacional de la Mujer se crea mediante el decreto No.232-98, del 30 de septiembre de 1998. Éste se publica en la Gaceta No. 28798 del 11 de febrero de 1999. [We are an autonomous, social development institution that is responsible for developing, promoting, coordinating and monitoring of action plans implemented by the National Women's Policy and the integration of women into sustainable development. The National Institute for Women was created by Decree No.232-98, September 30, 1998. This is published in the Gazette No. 28798 of February 11, 1999.]

⁷⁴ The names of the victims identified in this thesis are not their real names.

children in an almost automatic, but nervous, state. One example of this type of behavior was observed whenever her baby cried, she automatically rushes to pick her up and walk back and fourth with her in a very automated fashion.

Carmen's older child is also very timid, almost as if he doesn't know what to think or do when someone approaches him. It as if he is trying to figure out of you're going to hit him or play with him. Once he decides that you're there to play with him, he become very energetic and active and is extremely playful. It appears that Carmen has severe mental health issues. Carmen mentioned how hard it was for her staying at the *Casa Hogar* and that she was going to return to her husband.

Claudia⁷⁵ has a three-year old daughter. Most of her abuse was psychological. She and her husband share custody of their daughter, who spends eight days with her mother and then eight days with her father. Claudia wants to be independent and is beginning to reestablish her life by having a part-time job outside the *Casa Hogar*.



Photo 35: Claudia, Carmen and Reina.

⁷⁵ The names of the victims identified in this thesis are not their real names.

In addition to the abuse suffered by all these women, the situations are becoming even more dangerous because two of these women have begun to fight violence with violence. For some time now Natalia and Reina continue to suffer from verbal abuse but when their husbands try to hit them they don't let them and have even started to return the punches. Although it's not acceptable to be physically beaten by their spouses, the violence can only escalate if the response to violence is more violence. Natalia indicated that she could continue withstanding the abuse, for the sake of her children, as long as it was not physical abuse.

Over time it is possible for the victim to become the abuser. A good example of this type of situation is the relationship that now exists between Alicia's in-laws. The husband physically and psychologically abused his wife throughout the life together, but the tables gradually turned as the husband became older. He has now become the recipient of the abuse in the household, and the wife has almost killed her husband on two occasions. Nothing good comes out of violence.

There is another factor in the cycle of abuse. When the children, especially the sons, reach a certain age, they often start defending their mothers. This only exposes these children, as well as their mothers, to heightened risks and dangers of domestic violence; relationships get complicated. The mothers are afraid that their sons and/or daughters will be hurt, or even killed defending them.

6.1. Horror Stories

These following stories are accounts from data collected by CAMO. These stories of horror are horrendous acts of violence. Sadly, this is the story of so many Honduran women who live in fear daily... not knowing when, where or how the violence will appear. Their communities, waiting for their horror story to become reality, render millions of Honduran women helpless and hopeless.

My children were hungry

[We] recently saw a village woman with both arms cut off arrive at the hospital. When asked what had happened, the woman explained, "My children were hungry. We only had one egg, so I cooked it for them. When my husband came home, he was mad there was no food and he cut my arms off." (Tschiegg - www.CAMO.org)

He reached for his machete

A young woman had worked all day washing clothes to earn money to put food on the table. When her husband returned to their one-room adobe house in Santa Rosa around dusk, she was curious whether he had found work. So outraged was the villager that his wife dare ask, he reached for his machete, split her head open and slashed at her face. Just to make certain she was dead, he stood over her and repeatedly hacked at her arms and legs.

A neighbor found the young woman lying on the dirt floor, still alive. It took two months for her to emerge from the coma. When she was healthy enough to process what had happened, she decided to press charges against her husband. It was a brave step for a woman in Honduras, where most females have been raised to fear men. But it was to no avail.

Though she is scarred for life, her husband, who is now living with another woman, was never prosecuted. (Tschiegg - www.CAMO.org)

CHAPTER 7: SERVICE-LEARNING

Service-learning means linking education and service. According to the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse:

Service learning is a method of teaching that combines formal instruction with a related service in the community. As a teaching method, service learning is best categorized as a form of experiential education. Specifically, service learning integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, encourage lifelong civic engagement, and strengthen communities for the common good. (National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2013).⁷⁶

The Community Service Act of 1990 defines service learning as:

A method under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community; is coordinated with an [...] institution of higher education, [...] and with the community; and helps foster civic responsibility; and that is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students; [...] and provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience.⁷⁷

Proponents of service-learning adhere to Dewey's school of thought who "believed that learning occurred through a cycle of action and reflection not just rote memorization." (Diaz, 2008). Although there is no reference to service-learning as such in Dewey's philosophy of education, "for Dewey, community is the central point for the practice of democracy, which leads to overcoming societal problems through the creation of social awareness." (Diaz, 2008).

Dewey's statement below is relevant to the purpose of the service-learning in Honduras courses and it is important to remember that linguistic knowledge loses its

⁷⁶ <http://www.servicelearning.org>

⁷⁷ <http://www.servicelearning.org/what-service-learning>

value when used only as a medium of getting information, without acquiring cultural knowledge. Both cultural and linguistic knowledge are important aspects for students participating in service-learning courses.

Language is almost always treated in the books of pedagogy simply as the expression of thought. It is true that language is a logical instrument, but it is fundamentally and primarily a social instrument. Language is a device for communication; it is a tool through which one individual comes to share the ideas and feelings of others. When treated simply as a way of getting individual information, or as a means of showing off what one has learned, it loses its social motive and end. (Dewey, 1897) (Diaz, 2008)

Over the past twenty years service-learning has been developing in academic settings. Academic institutions are realizing that service-learning gives students skills that cannot be transmitted in the classroom settings. By bringing students and communities together, these courses help students develop citizenship skills and values that they will bring with them into the working world and carry them throughout their lives. Academic institutions will be promoting students that have real-life experiences, sending them out into the world better prepared and ready to meet the challenges of today's world. Service-learning is a way to improve the community while bringing the real world into the classroom.

These experiences allow students to utilize and develop skills - some of which they already have, but are not even aware they have them; reflect upon the experiences and situations in which they find themselves; realize their abilities to change things at local as well as international levels; become more aware of and sensitive to different and diverse cultures; and become better world citizens. In service-learning, the "mission is to empower individuals and communities through worldwide service and learning. Service-

learning allows for mutually empowering experiences where volunteers learn and grow, and communities are served in the process.” (Ho).

Why service-learning in a Spanish speaking country? It is a good way for students studying Spanish to totally immerse themselves in the language and culture. I feel the most effective way to learn a language is by experiencing and living the culture. In my opinion, learning the language through the culture helps reinforce critical language and cultural skills that can only be acquired through direct contact and interaction with the community. There are huge academic and social differences between students learning the language in a classroom and those learning through direct contact with the language and culture. (Grusky, 2000) Service-learning in Honduras has given students much more confidence and life skills than a simple classroom experience. Students get to reflect upon and evaluate their language skills before, during and after their experience. Another important observation made by some students was that even though they had visited other Spanish-speaking countries as tourists, they didn’t learn as much Spanish, or culture, as they had during the service-learning experience.

In this particular service-learning course, SPA 496 / MLC 496 Service-Learning in Honduras, students added a language-learning component to their experiences. Spanish courses or being fluent in Spanish is not a prerequisite for taking this course, but spending time in a Spanish speaking community definitely adds a different dynamic to the experience for both the non-Spanish speaking and Spanish-speaking students. Although most students have some knowledge of the Spanish language, bonds can be forged and experiences enriched between the non-Spanish speakers and the Spanish speakers through collaboration and joint ventures. There is an unspoken rule that Spanish-speaking students pair up with non-Spanish speaking students, which has

resulted, time after time, in extremely positive and educational experiences. This has been proven to be a win-win situation for all those involved in this process.

Students get the opportunity to apply academic learning to real-life situations through service-learning, which is extremely beneficial when these students emerge into the “real” world, for they acquire knowledge through real-life experiences. Service-learning also promotes reflection and critical thinking. Reflection allows students the opportunity to identify preconceived ideas, allowing them to separate feelings from observation and thus a better understand both. Critical thinking “promotes the connection of the personal and the intellectual which has more meaning to the individual, and therefore provides a more lasting reserve of knowledge to be used later in students’ live.” (Diaz, 2008).

Service-learning promotes active learning and

guides students to reflect on their community experiences, link what they learn theoretically in the classroom to these experiences, gain insight into their own perspective and the perspectives of others, and make changes in the application of what they have learned to ongoing and future experiences. Such critical thinking moves the learner away from memorization and facilitates the integration of observations with theoretical knowledge. (Goldberg, Richburg, Wood. 2006).

Service-learning is the bridge between students and communities. In order to know the social, economic, and political issues of a community, one needs to cross over into the unknown world, or in this case the unknown community. The construction of “a bridge” is important to continued access, thus allowing continued sharing and experiences.

One of the many positive aspects of this particular service-learning course, SPA 496 / MLA 496 Service-Learning in Honduras, is the valuable and strong network that has been established through yearly visits. With such a network already in place, the

students come into an established cooperative and collaborative local format that allows student's seamless integration into the community. Without this pre-established network, half of the students there would be lost in logistics. This service-learning class has contacts in transportation, hospitals, politics, commerce, government, nursing homes, orphanages, and schools. Students can actually arrive on day one and go directly to a specific predetermined location on day two. For example, engineering students can join projects building safe and ventilated stoves in one-room, dirt floor homes of a destitute village in a remote area; nursing students can immediately integrate into the local healthcare system; Women's Studies students have access to a wealth of resources regarding women's issues; and all students are encouraged to participate in the visits and activities at the orphanages and elderly homes, as well as activities within the community.

7.1. Service-Learning Class Core Requirements

The service-learning class core requirements consist of regular debriefing/sharing sessions (check-in session), keeping a journal and making daily entries, which are collected and reviewed periodically, an individual student project, and a group project.

7.1.1. Regular Check-In Sessions (debriefing/sharing opportunities)

Regular check-in sessions are the foundation to the service-learning experience. These evening check-in sessions can be thought of as debriefing and sharing opportunities, as well as instructional and informational sessions with the professor. Each student gets to share what he/she has done during the day and share his/her plans for the next day. This sharing allows other students to know what others are doing and decide if this is something they would like to be a part of in the days to come. Given that students experience many emotions, thoughts, and questions throughout the experience, these check-ins are an optimal time for discussing concerns, observations, feelings, etc. that many be overwhelming for some, many, or all students. Students are encouraged to

talk about their feelings in a group setting, or in a confidential setting with the professor. However the debriefings are done, they are extremely important to a successful service-learning experience.

7.1.2. Keeping a Journal and Making Daily Entries (which are collected and reviewed periodically).



Photo 36: Lots of reflection and relaxation while journaling the day's events.

Journals are an equally important part of the learning equation. These journals are important as a source of reflection, as well as a written record of experiences, language and terminology acquisition, action and reaction, activities, names, dates and miscellaneous information, etc. I regularly referred back to my yearly journals for information and to jog my memory about experiences and events.

7.1.3. Individual Student Project

Each student is responsible for developing an individual project during his or her time in the community. These projects can be as varied as the students themselves. Students taking part in the service-learning class represent a broad range of areas of study. Students are encouraged to be creative when choosing their projects. Project ideas

are presented to the professor for approval prior to departing for the service-learning location; however, many projects change once the service-learning experience begins. Many times student projects evolve along with their experiences. This type of flexibility, along with certain guidelines, really seems to stimulate students to explore their ideas, options, and opportunities... with amazing results.

7.1.4. Group Project

In addition to individual projects, students are required to participate in and develop a group project. This project gives students the opportunity to work together, which encourages each student to use skills they already have, as well as to develop new skills during the group project process. Students are asked to work, reflect and troubleshoot together in order to develop a solid group project. In this particular SPA 496 / MLC 496 Service-Learning in Honduras class, the dynamics of having students with diverse interests and areas of study lead to creative problem solving. Each student has a different perspective to offer the group, which enhances the experience for all. One example of a group project was the Spring 2006 Reader's Theater based on student experiences and presented to the University of Maine community. This Reader's Theater group project was titled, "How do you want to be taught?", which was written and performed exclusively by the students in a public presentation at the end of the semester. This project brought the students together to reflect upon and share their experiences with service-learning through the script for the Reader's Theater. The entire class participated in one way or another... there was a lot of organizing and coordinating to do for a Reader's Theater presentation involving 28 students.

CHAPTER 8: THE IMPACT OF SERVICE-LEARNING ON STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

Over the course of the service-learning classes and repeated visits to the same location there have been many changes in figuring out how to best do service-learning in Western Honduras. In the beginning there was much emphasis placed on collecting and taking donations to the region. However, each visit evolved as the groups became more familiar with the community and its needs. Although donations were needed and appreciated, there was more to keep in mind when preparing and participating in Service-Learning in Honduras. While donations are basically about giving a handout, service-learning was about giving the community a helping hand and an opportunity for everyone to learn from one another. The goals of Service-learning evolved into real hands-on work where the students themselves, in conversations with the community, were able to see where the needs and desires of the community lay.

One good example of knowing what the community needs and wants, rather than others, in all good faith, deciding what certain groups within the community need is the following:

Upon visiting an orphanage for babies in Santa Rosa, one particular NGO, while establishing roots in the community, was drawn to what they perceived as spending too much time washing clothes and dirty diapers by hand. For the NGO that problem could be resolved by using an electric automatic washing machine, which was promptly bought and delivered to the nuns at the orphanage. Now, to the surprise of the NGO upon subsequent visits, the clothing and diapers were still being washed by hand and the washing machine was nowhere in sight. It seems that the nuns had sold the washing machine because of the elevated cost of electricity for the orphanage. Although this was a nice gesture by the NGO, this was not what the nuns wanted and although it solved one

problem for them, it created a bigger one. Therefore, the nuns decided to sell the washing machine and use the money elsewhere. Shortly after the washing machine was donated to the orphanage, the caregivers were back to hand washing the clothing and diapers. Another consideration about the automatic washing machine was the cost of maintenance and repair. In the minds of the nuns, this well-intentioned automatic washing machine would result in more cost to the already precarious orphanage budget.

This account was relayed to our group by the head of the NGO as a guide and learning tool for service-learning students. Service-learning students learned that the number one rule of donating and community service is to get to know the community and its needs first and foremost, and not be guided by what we, as outsiders, think they need. By returning to the same community year after year, students are able to learn from past years' experiences and build upon them. Also, seeing some familiar faces, as well as many new ones, comforted the community. Having these previously established friendships and partnerships allows new students to integrate more quickly and establish their own ties and experiences within the community.

8.1. SPA 496 / MLC 496 Service-Learning Classes are Successful and Beneficial to Students

Students come from all areas of study on campus and are encouraged to explore projects they can apply to their specific interests and academics. There is no set required project, which allows the students, upon consultation and approval by the Profe, to individualize their projects, resulting in such diverse and interesting individual projects. And, of course, since we are a unified group, all the students work together on a group project. The experience for students is two-fold, creating an individual project of their choosing and interest, but at the same time working together as a group to produce a joint project. Non-Spanish-speaking students are paired up with Spanish speaking students

when necessary. Students learn to collaborate, oftentimes teaming up and/or helping one another with their projects. Students learn from the community and from each other. The keys to a great service-learning experience are **observation, interaction, communication and collaboration** within the student group, as well as within the local community.

One definition of service-learning that completely captures the true essence and goal of the SPA 496 / MLC 496 Service-Learning in Honduras experiences is that: Service-Learning is “an educational method that involves students in challenging tasks that meet genuine community needs and requires the application of knowledge, skills, and systematic reflection on the experience.” (Toole, 1999). This definition is the foundation upon which all the SPA 496 / MLC 496 Service-Learning in Honduras courses is solidly based.

The learning part of service-learning allows student to use concepts, content and skills from their academic disciplines and actively involves the student in their own learning process. Learning also engages students in tasks that challenge them in many ways by taking students outside their comfort zones, which results in critical socio-cultural development. Assessment of experience is a good way to enhance student learning and it is also a documentation and evaluation tool used to measure how well the student met class requirements and/or guidelines.

The service part of service-learning engages students in service-related tasks that have clear goals, meets the needs of the community, and has significant importance and impact upon the community, as well as upon themselves... sometimes in unexpected ways. The impact upon participants, students and community, is not only immediate, but, at times, delayed and can even last a lifetime. Some examples of these long-lasting impacts are presented below.

The critical components that support learning and service are many and varied. Service-learning emphasizes student voices in the selection, development, implementation and evaluation of their service projects. It promotes cultural-social diversity through its participants, encouraging communication and interaction within the selected community, resulting in cooperation and collaboration. (Diaz, July 2008). Service-learning “Prepares students for all aspects of their service experience including understanding their role, the skills and information required, safety precautions and sensitivity to the people with whom they will be working.” (Diaz, July 2008). It promotes student reflection as the foundation of the service-learning course/curriculum requirements. Student reflection is realized before, during, and after service through a variety of methods that encourage students to use critical thinking skills. One final component that supports learning and service is that it acknowledges and validates students’ service, which can be extremely rewarding and beneficial to students throughout their personal and professional lives. (Diaz, July 2008).

8.1.1. Essential Qualities for Students Searching for Successful and Rewarding

Service-Learning Experiences

Some excellent qualities for service-learners to possess are the abilities to be a good listener, for you may hear and/or learn some surprising things; be talkative, have a sense of curiosity and ask lots of questions; get involved and actively participate; have a positive attitude, be open-minded, tolerant and non-judgmental (it helps to check your bias at the airport); and finally be patient and flexible, **GO WITH THE FLOW**, for things don’t always happen as planned.

Cultural awareness is one of the benefits of student entering a community foreign to them. Cultural knowledge is critical in learning about others, who they are and how and what they think. Such knowledge facilitates interaction between individuals and offers opportunities for this knowledge to develop into a sensitivity and understanding of others.

8.1.2. Sharing Through Regular [Evening] Check-Ins

Sharing through regular evening check-ins allows students to share their experiences and projects (see Photos 37 and 38 below). This the perfect time for students to talk about emotions or feelings that were evoked during the day's experiences because certain experiences can be very emotionally challenging. Students learn to support one another and they find out what other members of the group are doing. Students are informed of who is doing what, where and when, thus allowing them to join different groups to participate in a variety of projects and activities. These check-in sessions allow students to brainstorm, ask questions, and plan the next day's agenda.



Photo 37: Group evening check-in, April 2007.



Photo 38: Group evening check-in, May 2011.

8.2. Students from SPA 496 / MLC 496 Service-Learning in Honduras Classes are Beneficial to the Community of Santa Rosa de Copán

Hondurans get the opportunity to interact with people from another culture, which allows them to learn by listening and discussing ideas, creating mutual learning. The informal exchange between the students and community members is extremely beneficial in all sorts of interactions, from talking to playing together. Sharing ideas and having real communications help people understand one another.

Community leaders and members know what their wants and needs are better than those who come willing and ready to help. It is much more sustainable when projects are those that will benefit them on a long-term basis. The community benefits not only from projects done by the service-learning students, but also their interactions allow the students to see and hear what the community wants and needs. These types of interactions often guide the types of projects and activities developed by the students.

From 2006 to 2011 service-learning classes have had the privilege to share in and develop projects within the community, such as those listed below in Figure 10. Many more projects and activities have been done over the years, and the list is long, but these are some of the more memorable ones.

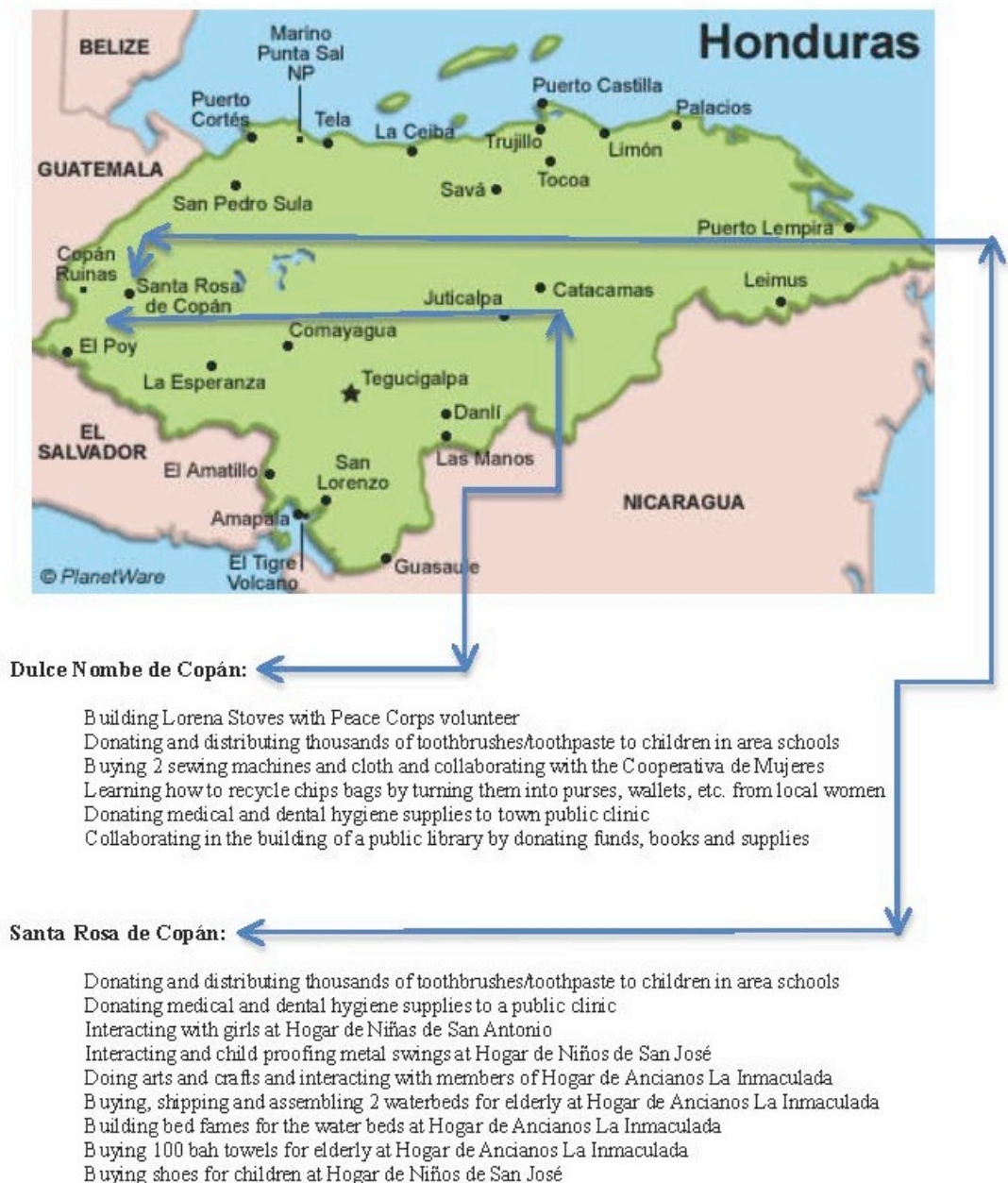


Figure 10: Other SPA 496 / MLC 496 Service-Learning in Honduras Community Projects from 2006 to 2011.

8.3. Target Community of SPA 496 / MLC 496 Service-Learning in Honduras

Classes is Beneficial to Students

The most obvious benefit is the opportunity for students to practice Spanish. However, there are many more benefits, some are not as visible as others. Students have the opportunity to explore beyond their comfort zones, being at the perfect place to see, hear and experience moments and situations that they would never experience otherwise. Students are thrown into a culture that is so new and different; which challenges many of their values, thoughts and prejudices. The face-to-face contact with community members opens a whole new world and presents a gambit of thought and meaning never before experienced.

Students are asked to take the experiences and truly reflect upon their thoughts and feelings, their reactions and interactions, as well as their comfort and discomfort levels within the context of their experiences. It is amazing to see the transformation and growth of students participating in these service-learning classes. Students can be seen going from shy, hesitant, uncomfortable with their initial language skills, to outgoing and involved with a new found or improved sense of self regarding their participation within the community, language skills and communication abilities. A new comfort level within the community is clearly obvious by the end of their stay; bringing a sense a connection to the community and it's population.

The majority of students form strong bonds within this community, some bonds that last a very long time. Although these students are still foreigners and are there for a relatively short period of time, a sense of commitment is ever present among the group and within individual students. In fact, since the very first service-learning class arrived in Santa Rosa de Copán, as many as 15 students returned two or three consecutive years,

and two of those 15 have returned every year since their first trip in 2006. A number of these returnees went as volunteers once their academic obligations had been met.

Many students that participated in service-learning often find their career paths affected and directed or redirected by their on-site experiences and participation within a community such as Santa Rosa de Copán.

8.4. Growing Interest Among Students

Although research and studies have been carried out to answer the questions many academics, promoters and critics of service-learning have posed as to the effectiveness, the benefits and downfalls of service-learning, responses from actual students that have experienced service-learning can be valuable insight. The SPA/MLA Service-Learning class has been very successful and is a popular class for a wide variety of students from all over campus. This is evident in the comments of service-learning students over the years.

Below are some responses from students that participated one or more times in a service-learning class. As part of the reflection process of the service-learning class, Professor March asked students the following question: “How has this course affected/impacted your life?” These quotes, which have been collected from students over the years, demonstrate how this type of teaching has affected them and their academic years.

When I first walked into the classroom I didn't know anyone. However, within no time at all I connected with many students and even formed a close friendship with some. Most of the students took this class very seriously and the time spent in Honduras left their hearts marked forever. It was wonderful to see how some students discovered a new world and life calling in Honduras.
~ dmb 2006

From that day on, I began working up my confidence in class and speaking freely, not worrying so much about my mistakes. I did end up going to Honduras with Kathleen, which proved to be an incredibly rewarding experience that I learned so much from. I realized that I was falling in love with the language. Being able to speak to girls in an orphanage, a street vendor, and an organic farmer in Honduras excited me and made me realize that I found great joy in speaking the language and meeting people who were native speakers. I decided to change my major to Spanish. And I asked Kathleen March to be my advisor. ~ Molly 2007

In 2008, Kathleen and I returned to Honduras with another group of students. This time I really dug my heels in and worked with the people of Santa Rosa and Dulce Nombre de Copán. I befriended a 78 year old man named Jose Santos Chavez and helped him find the confidence to create art. Kathleen and I spent a great deal of time with a woman's cooperative in Dulce Nombre. My time spent in Honduras partaking in Service-Learning activities became the focus of my Senior Capstone project, which wouldn't have been possible without Kathleen March's sound advice, guidance, and support. ~ Molly 2008

This class has been different than any other. We're doing something real, something that matters. We have been learning about what is happening in [...] as well as improving our Spanish, but we are doing more than writing something to pass in. ~ Jennifer

This class has given me the opportunity to apply my Spanish language skills to different projects in the community. In doing so I have realized how important it is to help our community partners. I have really enjoyed this experience. ~ Robin

Working in partnership with [...] has been an experience that emphasizes the importance of cross cultural understanding and the need for dialogue. Ultimately we all have the basic desire to be happy, desire much for our children and families, and we recognize there is very little difference between our cultures on many levels. It is a great experience to support, listen, and advocate for our brothers and sisters. ~ Susan

This class has done well to open my eyes to the happenings of places outside the US borders. It has also succeeded in opening my eyes to our Spanish-speaking neighbors all around us. It has been fun to be involved in something that feels a bit bigger than myself. ~ Corey

This has actually been one of my favorite classes so far in university. The theme changes from day to day. There is no set text or schedule. [...] I love the flexibility. Also, it's nice to have an actual project at the end [...]. ~ Kerry

Well, what can I say...only that this has been one of the best classes I have ever taken in my life. This Service-Learning class was varied and multifaceted. [La Profe] made us think, see, hear, talk, discover, reflect, and so much more throughout this class. We are indebted to her for opening our eyes, ears, hearts and minds. ~ dmb

Service comes in many different shapes and forms. You really start to feel part of a community and like you're making a difference. [...] I hope to continue doing work like this. ~ Molly

8.5. Student Impact Regarding Domestic Violence

The following account is just one example of the impact on students joining in my research at the *Casa Hogar*. The following text from a student participating in the Service-Learning class in 2011 truly demonstrates many emotions and holds much meaning for its author. This text was written, a year after the 2011 class, by one participant who wanted to share her feelings with a fellow service-learning classmate who could truly understand her. It is amazing how the experiences from one class and moment in time can evoke feelings in so many ways and at unexpected moments in the future. The following brings a variety of emotions that have been forever ingrained in the memory of this compassionate student.

8.6. Reflections of a Service-Learning Student

Hi Darlene,

I did this for my art class that I'm in and thought you might be interested in it. I choose [sic] the subject matter because my eyes tear up every time I look at this child. [February 2012].



Photo 39: A digital painting of Freddy.

Se llama Freddy. That's the name of the boy in this painting. I met him less than a year ago when I went to Honduras with a Central American outreach class mainly focused on improving our skills *de Español*. He was living at Casa Hogar, a woman's home for women from abusive relationships. Freddy was the only male allowed in the building. Not even American volunteers were allowed to be men. [No men are ever allowed in the Casa Hogar, not even American men who come to volunteer in the community.] His mother's name was Christina [sic]. She had Freddy when she was 16, and we met her when she was 20 and he was 3. She also had an infant. Christina [sic] was married to a man who physically abused her to the point where she had been hospitalized. That is how she, Freddy, and her daughter ended up in Casa Hogar.

Honduras *es una cultura de machismo*. It is run by men, and although women have jobs and contribute to society they are [...] thought of as things to men, not people. Abusive relationships are commonplace. Sometimes this abuse is physical, but often it is mental. Society

considers them [abuse] marital disputes and encourages the couple to work through their problems. It is a catholic society and divorces do not exist, even if the police are involved, like with Christina [sic]. Women, no matter the circumstances, are never encouraged to leave their husbands.

He [Freddy] was one of the shyest children I have ever met. His watery eyes always seemed as if they were judging whether you were about to hurt him or play with him. He would hide behind whatever he was near until he made up his mind. If you were going to do the latter, he morphed into the loudest and craziest three-year-old ever, but he was always cautious.

The day we left Honduras, we went to say goodbye to the women and Freddy at Casa Hogar. His mother told us she couldn't do it on her own anymore, and her husband really wasn't that bad. **She was going to go back to him the next day.**

~ Caitlin Howland [Service-Learning Student 2011]
Fourth Year Economics and Spanish major

CHAPTER 9: WERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

There are feelings of frustration, indignation, pain and hopelessness caused by the impotence and indifference regarding the abuse of so many women, which indicates that the authorities in charge of carrying out justice actually do nothing about it. One woman said, “*¿Cómo es posible que después de todo lo que se ha denunciado las autoridades no hagan nada?*”⁷⁸ [“How can it be that after all the complaints filed the authorities do nothing?”].

As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, violence against women is a global problem that needs to be addressed using certain parameters, but at the same time these parameters need to take into account the many cultural and social dynamics that are key in fighting the uphill battle of violence against women.

Why? This is one of the first questions asked after a domestic homicide. Why did this happen? Why didn’t law enforcement do something? Why didn’t the victim speak up? Why didn’t we see the sign of abuse that lead to this tragedy? Why didn’t we prevent it?

Although it may be easier to walk away or turn our backs on domestic violence signs, we must not and can no longer afford to do that. This is a human rights abuse issue, as well as a damaging trend for society. We all must work together to combat this social malaise that has raised its ugly head here at home and around the world. Domestic violence touches everyone, from the most privileged to the underprivileged, as well as wealthiest to the poorest around the globe.

There seems to be a general consensus that domestic violence situations tends to affect the impoverished and underprivileged, when in reality domestic violence is not limited to any one racial, gender, cultural or economical class. Just recently the general

⁷⁸ Comment made by a domestic violence advocate in Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras in 2006.

manager of Kia Motors in San Salvador, El Salvador killed his wife on March 24, 2012 by shooting her seven times with his gun. During the investigation of the scene, investigators found “clear signs of violence” at the scene.⁷⁹ This is clearly someone who cannot be described as impoverished and underprivileged.

9.1. Building Bridges: Creating Awareness Through Education and Outreach

How can this be done effectively and meaningfully? This is one of the hardest questions any community can ask itself. Over the years of research several examples have been found representing the efforts by communities and its members to educate and do outreach regarding violence against women and the devastating effects it can have on the community and the population.

CAMO (Central American Medical Outreach, Inc.) [Fundación CAMO, in Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras] is a humanitarian-aid organization launched in 1993 by a former Peace Corps nurse, Kathy Tschiegg.⁸⁰ The link below gives a brief overview of work being done in Honduras by CAMO in “A Reflection of Service.”⁸¹

Honduras is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere with about 80% of its citizens living in conditions of extreme poverty, and the majority of children. These children are neglected by a society that has thrown them away and a government that is doing very little. [...] I wanted to do research about the girls in Honduras and assist them in using their voices to make educated decisions about their own lives. (Tschiegg, CAMO founder and chief executive officer)

CAMO’s mission as a humanitarian organization is to improve the quality of life of people in Central America by strengthening health care systems and promoting

⁷⁹ To read the whole article go to <http://www.contrapunto.com.sv/violencia/feminicidios-no-ceden-en-el-salvador>

⁸⁰ Kathryn Tschiegg (CAMO founder and chief executive officer) was moved by the suffering she observed as a registered nurse in the Peace Corps while serving as a volunteer in Honduras. She founded CAMO in 1993, which has taken on many of the health issues facing the community of Santa Rosa de Copán and the surrounding regions. (CAMO)

⁸¹ **CAMO - A Reflection of Service**, July 16, 2008 - Uploaded by CAMOUSA
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OG4Kj9tV-xc>

sustainable community development. Each year, Fundación CAMO distributes more than \$2 million in donated supplies, professional services and financial contributions through its 16 programs and community development. Today, CAMO is one of the most recognized non-profit health care organizations in the region. (CAMO, 2012). Kathy Tschiegg has been the driving force behind many local and national efforts to help improve the health and well-being of the underprivileged and poor people of Honduras over the past 20 years. Tschiegg was honored recently with the inaugural General Health Worker REAL award⁸² for her work in Honduras with CAMO. She was one of several honorees presented with the award at the first Patient Safety, Science and Technology Summit in California on Jan. 14, 2013. CAMO, founded in 1993, celebrated its 20th anniversary in May, 2013. Tschiegg noted the organization provides about 250,000 health care services each year to those in need in Honduras.

(<http://www.camo.org/news/tschiegg-honored-real-award-work-camo>).

Among the efforts undertaken to raise awareness and combat domestic violence there are three videos that address the community. These videos highlight:

A police-training program⁸³ being carried out in 2007.

[Domestic Violence in Honduras – Police Training Programming](#), April 27, 2007
Uploaded by UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=2t2POSohNjA

A 2008 overview of the plans for building a women's shelter [*Casa Hogar*],⁸⁴ a place of hope for women needing refuge from deadly violence. According to CAMO,

“In Western Honduras the leading cause of death among women is not breast cancer, it's not cervical cancer, and it's not heart disease, it's domestic violence. But in a culture where violence against

⁸² More about Tschiegg's award can be found at www.therealawards.com.

⁸³ [Domestic Violence in Honduras – Police Training Programming](#), April 27, 2007 - Uploaded by UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) www.youtube.com/watch?v=2t2POSohNjA

⁸⁴ [CAMO Women's Shelter - Women's Shelter in Honduras Serves Domestic Victims – CAMO](#), August 7, 2008 - Uploaded by camousa <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ3lv1STVQY>

women has only been addressed for the last decades, most abuse continues unpunished and tolerated in silence by society as well as its victims.” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ3lv1STVQY> CAMO, 2008)

CAMO Women's Shelter - Women's Shelter in Honduras Serves Domestic Victims – CAMO, August 7, 2008 - Uploaded by camousa
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ3lv1STVQY>

And the 2010 testimony of a woman subjected to violence at the hands of her abuser.⁸⁵

CAMO Women Shelter – Sofia’s Story: A Domestic Violence Survivor, April 30, 2010 - Uploaded by ExecWB07 www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9tzAce754k

9.2. Service-Learning Students Build Bridges Instead of Walls

Walls separate and close people off from the world outside. However, bridges do just the opposite, they join and connect two separate and often inaccessible places. Some of the greatest thinkers/minds in the world have come to the same conclusion, such as Ralph Ellison and Isaac Newton. These two quotes below demonstrate their thoughts on the importance of building bridges and how it must be done through education. Education is reflected in and achieved through the process of service (-learning) and doing.

“Education is all a matter of building bridges.” ~ Ralph Ellison
“We build too many walls and not enough bridges.” ~ Isaac Newton⁸⁶

The following text is very meaningful to me, for it is the essence of this thesis and accurately defines the many students who have participated in SPA 496 / MLC 496 Service-Learning in Honduras throughout the years that I have witnessed; therefore I would like to share it.

⁸⁵ CAMO Women Shelter – Sofia’s Story: A Domestic Violence Survivor, April 30, 2010 - Uploaded by ExecWB07 www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9tzAce754k

⁸⁶ <http://www.quotessea.com/quotes/with/bridges>

Are You a Bridge Builder?

When you get right down to it, there are really only two types of people in this world, those who build bridges and those who don't. Are you a bridge builder? You very well may be and not even know it.

Bridge builders are team players and go out of their way to render support and encouragement to people they meet along the road of life. They truly understand the power of a well-timed kind word and the importance of sincere appreciation.

Bridge builders make outstanding mentors because of their eagerness to share and nurture. They are terrific role models and leaders in every sense of the word. Bridge builders unselfishly invest of their time and energy helping others to reach their full potential.

Bridge builders are always quick to praise people who have mentored them on their journey. They're extremely grateful that someone recognized their talent and helped them develop their potential.

Bridge builders help others not for personal gain or credit, but simply because it's the right thing to do. They don't build bridges for the sake of mere recognition; they build because it's in their very nature to do so.

Bridge builders care more than others think is wise, risk more than others think is safe and expect more than others believe is possible!

If you're a bridge builder congratulations, the world is a much better place because of the difference you make in the lives of others. How many bridges have YOU built lately?

~ John Boe, 2005⁸⁷

Several phrases of the above prose relates directly to the attitudes and behaviors demonstrated by the majority of service-learning students, such as the following:

1. **Are you a bridge builder? You very well may be and not even know it.** This is just something service-learning students do... get involved without hesitation.

⁸⁷ John Boe is a motivational speaker. http://www.johnboe.com/articles/bridge_builder.html

2. **Bridge builders are team players and go out of their way to render support and encouragement to people they meet along the road of life.** Service-learning students are great team players and team supporters.
3. **They truly understand the power of a well-timed kind word and the importance of sincere appreciation.** Service-learning students know what to say, even if that means saying nothing at all, especially when a hugs or pat on the back will do.
4. **Bridge builders unselfishly invest of their time and energy helping others to reach their full potential.** This phrase can only be referring to one person, Professor Kathleen March, who always gives 110% to her students and has a good eye when it come to seeing potential in students.
5. **Bridge builders help others not for personal gain or credit, but simply because it's the right thing to do.** Service-learning students are not looking for individual or personal accolades; for these students personal satisfaction and seeing the happiness they have spread throughout the community is more than enough for them.

Build bridges instead of walls and you will find a friend. I have had the pleasure of meeting and getting to know many bridge builders from the service-learning classes over the past 6 years.

In my experiences with the Service-Learning structure and method, as well as seeing how this type of hands-on academic learning brings out the best in students, I think Service-Learning works extremely well in most academic areas. I have seen it work many times. Students also have the opportunity to explore their inner and outer self with all the deep reflection require by service-learning.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The network I formed the first year, 2006, has lead me though the maze of NGOs community organizations, and governmental and departmental institutions, of Honduras and, more specifically, Santa Rosa de Copán. Networking allowed me to dig deeper into the community in order to get a closer look at domestic violence and how it affects women's lives, as well as the livelihood of the entire community.

It's clearly obvious that much work needs to be done within the community, and even more, with outreach and advocacy for the women themselves, who feel too helpless and hopeless to take a stand against their abusers. Social change is essential for women's rights, and this is a long-term fight. However, just reaching out and touching one person at a time in need of help and guidance can and will make a difference. The availability and accessibility of education, as well as the dissemination of resources and advocacy, is vital in the progression of human rights within the country, and especially for the Honduran women.

The truth is, there are no concrete answers or directions to take right now, for Honduran women, but the continuing quests to better understand the country, the community and its people may help all of us to lead down the path of least resistance toward social change. Combating domestic violence is a joint effort and all players (international, national and local) must be on board and determined to find viable solutions toward sensitizing the population for social change.

Throughout my research time on-site I was continually trying and wanting to understand why, with all the laws, campaigns, and community work, domestic violence efforts hadn't seemed to have any considerable impact on reducing the extreme violence women experienced on a daily basis. Although the final consensus from the Governor showed that even though the government recognizes domestic violence as a social

malaise, allocating 2% of its budget to combat domestic violence and establishing domestic violence agencies in the communities, this amount is not nearly enough to establish and staff the agency, and let alone leave enough money in the yearly budget to do community programming, trainings and campaigns. According to the Governor's calculations, each year agencies such as *Casa de la Mujer Copaneca* have barely enough money in their budget to have an office with one lawyer and one support person to manage the agency, leaving approximately \$100 per year for outreach, trainings, and services.

Funding effective domestic awareness efforts, such as education and programming seems to be going nowhere, which leaves the country with major social and health problems. These social and health issues can, and do, obstruct this country from successfully pulling itself out of its severe social and economic crisis.

The first recommendation I would like to make is for the Mayor of Santa Rosa de Copán. I would like to propose that the Mayor run PSAs (public service announcements) in his waiting room instead of having personal political campaign ads running constantly on the television in the his official city waiting room. These PSAs, which will be visible to the entire population, can address any number of social issues, and hopefully even domestic violence.

The idea of running/looping campaign announcements on a television in the waiting room is excellent; however, the elections are over and the community will benefit more from PSAs than outdated political ads.

I would like to propose that the community of the Department of Copán, and especially to Santa Rosa de Copán, openly support violence against women efforts and admit that there is a problem. Religious and community leaders need to be educated about domestic violence so they can be aware and willing to support efforts pertaining to

women's rights and equality. Government and local agencies and advocates need to develop a closer working relationship in developing trainings, educational materials and prevention programming; organize and promote several domestic violence informational campaigns per year; and encourage annual domestic violence trainings for all employees, and new employees, of companies, businesses and organizations.

Next, they should encourage community and neighborhood networking and provide information and education to these networks; be creative in activities that encourage community participation to promote and emphasize domestic violence awareness; organize funds raising activities that can raise funds for violence programming within the community.

This recommendation concerns the judicial system and all other players regarding the accountability of perpetrators. A zero tolerance policy should be promoted and carried out for all domestic violence cases, and subsequently imposed punishments need to be enforced and carried out accordingly. Always hold all abusers accountable at all times for their violent actions, regardless of their social and/or financial position within the community. Form coalitions with other rights groups/organizations to promote mutual and multiple social concerns. Create Victim/Witness Advocate Services through the judicial system to help guide and assist women through the entire legal and social process; from filing a complaint, to accompanying the woman to court, to continued follow-up and support.

The Honduran Government should be more consistent in addressing International women's rights issues and enforcing the laws that protect Honduran women and their rights. Better enforcement of existing agreements and laws pertaining to violence against women would not only benefit the women, but the entire country.

Allot more government and local funds to women's resource centers and women's shelters in order to keep them running efficiently and effectively. Reassess control over and transparency of the distribution of funds and management of budgets at all levels. This issue, according to the Governor of Copán, seems to be at the root of problem in the ongoing social malaise of violence against women. The Governor stated that there simply aren't enough funds budgeted by the President of Honduras. He went on to say that the only hope of achieving awareness about domestic violence and the harmful social and economic effects to the communities is social change, and that seems like a hopeless endeavor. There is simply not enough real interest or obvious benefit for the government, or the rest of the country, in fighting that battle at the moment.

At the beginning of my research in 2006 I was hopeful for the women suffering abuse. However, over time I have begun to see lots of efforts and actions on the part of many influential women in the community, but not enough overall recognition of the severity of this very fragile social situation. In 2006, when certain women in the community held influential positions, such as the governorship, family court judgeship and attorneys, domestic violence was brought to top of the agendas. This energy lasted for approximately 8 years, and some progress was made, especially with the funding and building of the *Casa Hogar* [Women's Shelter].

Nevertheless, my worst fears were confirmed in 2011 after interviewing the current Mayor and Governor of the region. Any hopes I had for the women of Santa Rosa were crushed and I came crashing back to reality. **The women of Santa Rosa de Copán will just have to wait!** It is a very sad thought indeed, and an even worse reality for so many courageous women.

CHAPTER 11: PHOTO JOURNAL

A photo is worth a thousand words and can tell a hundred stories. Photojournalists have real talent for bringing people, places and situations to life. They are experts in photographing their subjects so that the viewer can literally look into their souls. It is true that “Photos bring home the tragedy in a very different way than just words.” (Brady, 1862).⁸⁸ One such photojournalist is Dan Denardo. “Dan is an American photographer who is at home anywhere in the world. Commercial, documentary, and philanthropic work has taken Dan through more than twenty-five countries and widely varied venues.” (CAMO, 2011).

In October 2011, the extremely talented photographer Dan Denardo traveled to Honduras with the CAMO⁸⁹ teams. The photographs that he captured during his time there are truly amazing.⁹⁰ “Welcome to the real world... the world outside our privileged existence...”⁹¹ (Denardo, Honduras 2011).

This following photos present the 2006 to 2011 yearly group photographs of the many students that have participated in SPA 496 / MLC 496 Service-Learning at UMaine. There have been several earlier service-learning trips to Honduras, but only the groups from 2006 to 2011 have been highlighted. Secondly, the testimonies of a few courageous women demonstrate what domestic violence looks like through the eyes of its victims; the lost, forgotten and hurting women of Santa Rosa de Copán, Department of Copán in Western Honduras.

⁸⁸ Early journalist Mathew Brady, The Dead of Antietam photographs, 1862.

⁸⁹ Central American Medical Outreach [CAMO]

⁹⁰ <http://www.dandenardo.com/>

⁹¹ <http://danieldenardo.blogspot.com/2011/11/difficult-existence.html>

11.1. The Many Faces of Participants in SPA/MLC Service-Learning in Honduras from 2006 to 2011.



Photo 40: Service-learning students, May 2011 [21 women].



Photo 41: Service-learning students, May 2009 [3 men, 4 women].



Photo 42: Service-learning students, May 2008 [1 man, 7 women].



Photo 43: Service-learning students, April 2007 [2 men, 19 women].



Photo 44: Service-learning students, April 2006 [7 men, 21 women].

An interesting observation regarding the participants from 2006 to 2011 is the overwhelming number of women, greatly outnumbering the men. (refer to photos above).

11.2. Faces and Places in Honduras from 2006 to 2011.

There is so much more meaning when you know, have met, or have seen these people and places. You will always carry the memories in your head and the feelings in your heart, once the stories and the story makers have touched you.



Photo 45: *La calle principle* [main street].
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras



Photo 46: Farmer wandering down *la calle principal* [main street] early in the morning with his horses as he heads out to the fields for the day.
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras



Photo 47: Making [rolling] cigars is big business here.
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras



Photo 48: Heading home with his crop in tow after a long, hard day in the fields.
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras



Photo 49: Amazing beauty among such poverty.
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras



Photo 50: Enjoying *atol chuco* in the market. This little girl spends her days at the marketplace, where her mother and grandmother each have a small kiosk.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras

Atole/Atol Chuco (Mexican Spanish, from Nahuatl *ātōlli* [a:'to:l:i]) is a traditional masa-based Mexican and Central American (where it is known as *atol*) hot drink. The drink typically includes *masa* (corn hominy flour), water, *piloncillo* (unrefined cane sugar), cinnamon, vanilla and optional chocolate or fruit. The mixture is blended and heated before serving. *Atole* is made by toasting the *masa* on a *comal* (griddle), then adding water that was boiled with cinnamon sticks. The resulting blends vary in texture, ranging from porridge to a very thin liquid consistency. *Atole* can also be prepared with rice flour or oatmeal in place of *masa*.

(Source: <http://www.honduras.com/traditional-honduran-food-atol-chuco/>
http://www.myetymology.com/encyclopedia/Atol_chuco.html
<http://archivo.laprensa.hn/Ediciones/2010/09/19/Noticias/Atol-chuco-alimento-popular-en-occidente>)



Photo 51: *Mejores amigas* [best friends] each have a kiosk at the marketplace.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras



Photo 52: Doña Olivia⁹²
La Inmaculada home for the elderly.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras

⁹² Sadly, Doña Olivia passed away in 2010. I didn't get a chance to say goodbye!



Photo 53: Doña Cruz
La Inmaculada home for the elderly.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras



Photo 54: An elderly woman at *La Inmaculada* talks to nursing students.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras



Photo 55: This little boy needs more than just the toothbrushes he holds in his hands. He needs to go to school...
and he needs an education.
La Montañita, Copán



Photo 56: This little girl comes to the school every morning to get breakfast because her family has no money and very little resources for basic needs.
La Montañita de Copán, Honduras



Photo 57: Home filled with smoke, caused by the lack of stove ventilation.
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras



Photo 58: This very modest home needs a Lorena Stove.
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras



Photo 59: Construction process of a Lorena Stove.⁹³
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras

⁹³ Lorena stoves are constructed out of mud [lodo] and sand [arena]. Lodo + Arena = Lorena. They are constructed out of mud, sand, bricks, a stovepipe and a flat piece of metal. In 2006 it cost approximately \$20.00 for materials to make one of these Lorena Stoves.



Photo 60: Brand new Lorena Stove... just finished by service-learning students for a family in Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras.



Photo 61: Lighting up [testing] the new Lorena Stove.
Dulce Nombre de Copán, Honduras



Photo 62: This chimney channels smoke out of the kitchen.
Dulce Nombre de Copán

The **Lorena Adobe Stove** was designed as a simple-to-build cook stove for use in Central America, one that could be manufactured locally of materials. The name of Lorena Stove comes from the combination of the two Spanish words *lodo* and *arena* (meaning mud and sand) as the stoves are basically a mix of the two. It became very popular in Central America, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that it is the most popular improved cooking stove in the region. The Lorena Stove is an enclosed stove of rammed earth construction, with a chimney built onto it. Its chimney takes smoke out of the kitchen and it is well liked. It is pretty and a nice addition to the house. It is low cost and can be repaired and even built by the homeowner.

(Sources: <http://www.virtualfoundation.org/proposals/nndcsalu01.cgi>
<http://www.hedon.info/IncreasingFuelEfficiencyAndReducingHarmfulEmissionsInTraditionalCookingStove>)



Photo 63: A little TLC [tender loving care] means so much to the orphans.
San José Orphanage, Santa Rosa de Copán

El valor de una mujer.

La mujer salió de la costilla del hombre,
No de los pies para ser pisoteada,
Ni de la cabeza para ser superior.

Sino del lado para ser igual,
Debajo del brazo para ser protegida,
Y al lado del corazón para ser amada...

Solo eso, ser amada...

(autor desconocido)

The value of a woman.

The woman came from the man's rib,
Not the feet to be stepped on,
Nor the head to be superior.

But from the side to be equal,
Under the arm to be protected,
And beside the heart to be loved...

Only this, to be loved...

(unknown author)

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APPENDIX A

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, THE VICTIM AND THE OFFENDER

Myths and Facts About The Victim⁹⁴

Myth: Domestic violence only happens to poor, uneducated women and women of different race or color.

Fact: Persons of any class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age, and sex can be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence. Because women with money usually have more access to resources, poorer women tend to utilize community agencies, and are therefore more visible. However, rich and poor alike, tend to deny, excuse or ignore domestic violence. Note: Domestic violence is more common among poor women.

Myth: Some people deserve to be abused; they are responsible for the violence because they know how to provoke it.

Fact: No one deserves to be abused. The only person responsible for the abuse is the abuser. Physical violence, even among family members, is wrong and against the law.

Myth: If the victim didn't like it, she would leave.

Fact: There are many reasons why women may not leave, including fear for herself, her children and even pets. Not leaving does not mean that the situation is okay or that the victim wants to be abused. A woman may feel she cannot leave an abusive relationship for the following reasons:

- ◆ She hopes the relationship will get better.
- ◆ She doesn't want to break up the family.
- ◆ Her partner's abuse isolates her from friends and family.
- ◆ She is afraid her family and community will blame her for the abuse, or encourage her to stay.
- ◆ She feels ashamed and blames herself for the abuse.
- ◆ She fears for her own and her children's safety.

⁹⁴ List of myths and facts compiled from the following websites:

<http://www.safeplace.org/page.aspx?pid=336>

<http://www.familydomesticviolence.org/myths.html>

<http://mcedv.org/what-is-domestic-violence-and-abuse>

<http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/domviol/myths.htm>

- ◆ She depends upon her partner's income.
- ◆ She has lost self-esteem because of her partner's abuse.
- ◆ She has nowhere else to go.
- ◆ Her partner has threatened to harm her if she leaves.

The most dangerous time for a woman who is being abused is when she tries to leave. It has been estimated that the danger to a victim increases by 70% when she attempts to leave, as the abuser escalates his use of violence when he begins to lose control.

Myths and Facts About The Offender⁹⁵

Myth: Most people who commit violence are under the effects of alcohol or drugs.

Fact: Although many abusive partners also abuse alcohol and/or drugs, this is not the underlying cause of the abuse. Many abusers use alcohol/drugs as an excuse to explain their violence.

Myth: Men who assault their partners are mentally ill.

Fact: Most men who assault their partners are not violent outside the home. They do not hit their bosses or colleagues. When abusive men hit their partners, they often aim the blows at parts of the body where bruises don't show. If abused men were truly mentally ill, they could not selectively limit and control their violence.

Myth: Stress and anger lead to violence.

Fact: Violent behavior is a choice. Perpetrators use it to control their victims. Domestic violence is about abusers using their control, not losing their control. Their actions are very deliberate.

Myth: Abusers are violent in all their relationships.

Fact: Abusers choose to be violent to their partner and hurt them in ways they would never hurt someone else. Their violence is about control of the person.

⁹⁵ List of myths and facts compiled from the following websites:

<http://www.safeplace.org/page.aspx?pid=336>
<http://www.familydomesticviolence.org/myths.html>
<http://mcedv.org/what-is-domestic-violence-and-abuse>
<http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/domviol/myths.htm>

Myth: Men have a right to discipline their partners for misbehaving. Abuse is not a crime.

Fact: While our society derives from a patriarchal legal system that afforded men the right to physically chastise their wives and children, we do not live under such a system now. Women and children are no longer considered the property of men, and domestic violence is a crime.

Myths and Facts About The Violence⁹⁶

Myth: Woman abuse is a new social problem.

Fact: Woman abuse is not new. It has been condoned throughout history. For example, the widely used term "rule of thumb" comes from a 1767 English common law that permitted a husband to "chastise his wife with a whip or rattan no wider than his thumb."

Myth: Violence is about anger and rage. The abuser is out of control.

Fact: There are many reasons it is obvious that an abuser is in control of his actions. He does not batter other individuals. He waits until there are no witnesses and abuses the person he says he loves. The abuser very often escalates from pushing and shoving to hitting in places where the bruises and marks will not show. If he were "out of control" or "in a rage" he would not be able to direct or limit where his kicks or punches land.

Myth: Domestic violence is a personal problem between a husband and a wife.

Fact: Domestic violence affects everyone. The children and family members, as well as the entire community feel its affects.

Myth: Domestic Violence occurs in only a small percentage of relationships.

Fact: Domestic Violence occurs in up to 1/3 of all relationships, including same sex relationships. One in three women will report violence from a spouse or partner in their lifetime.

⁹⁶ List of myths and facts compiled from the following websites:

<http://www.safeplace.org/page.aspx?pid=336>

<http://www.familydomesticviolence.org/myths.html>

<http://mcedv.org/what-is-domestic-violence-and-abuse>

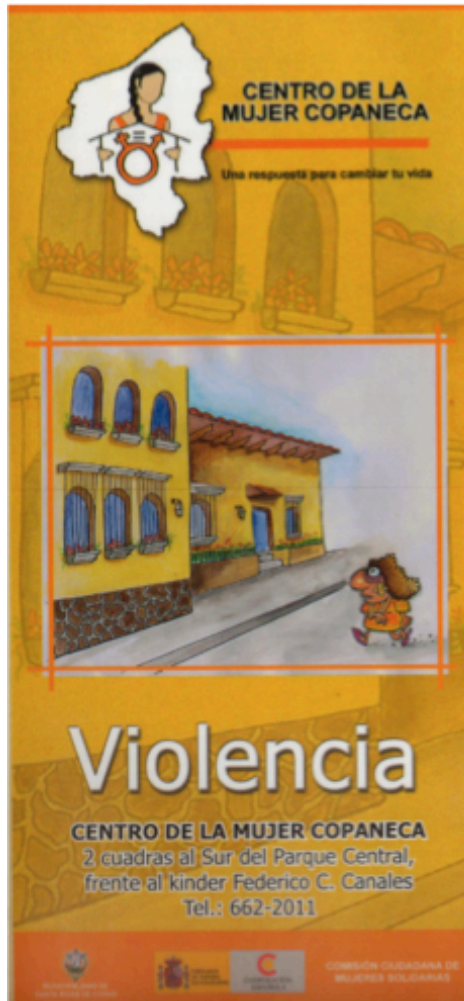
<http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/domviol/myths.htm>

Myth: Domestic Violence is usually a one time, isolated occurrence due to anger or stress.

Fact: Abuse is a pattern of control that includes the repeated use of a number of tactics including threats, intimidation, isolation, economic and financial control, and psychological and sexual abuse. Physical violence is only one of the tactics used to control another person.

APPENDIX B

PAMPHLETS AND INFORMATION DISTRIBUTED DURING A 2006 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS AND OUTREACH CAMPAIGN, UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE *CASA DE LA MUJER COPANECA.*



A



B

Figure 11: *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca* Pamphlets. A) Violencia [Violence]. B) Derechos de la Mujer [Women's Rights].

Types of Violence

Physical, Psychological,
Sexual, Patrimonial,
and Economic

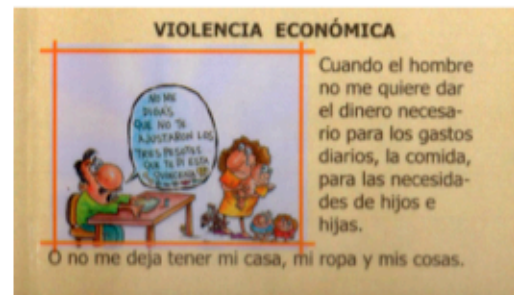
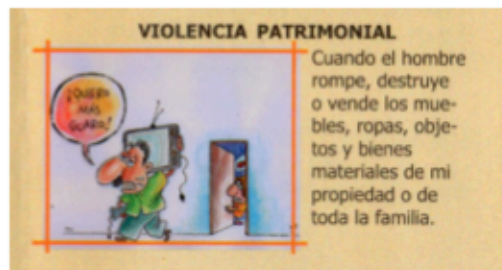
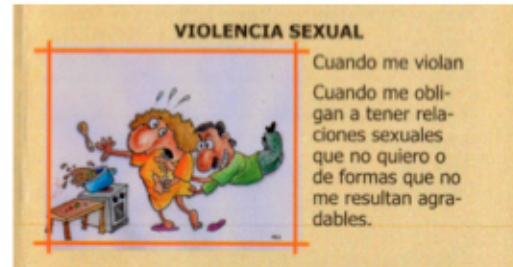
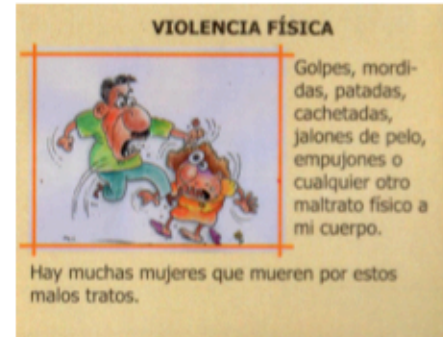


Figure 12: *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca* Pamphlet. Types of Violence.

Cycle of Violence

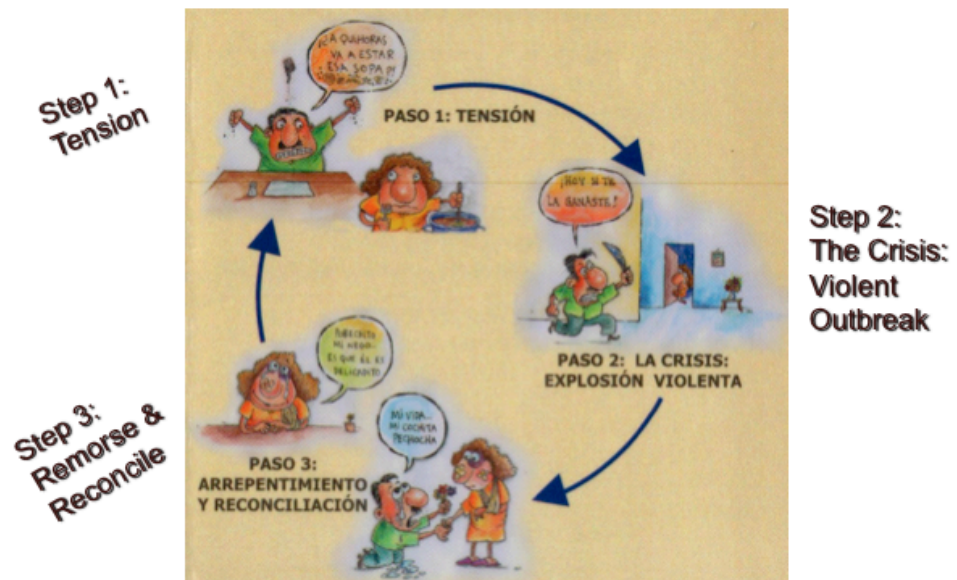


Figure 13: *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca* Pamphlet. Cycle of Violence.



And if nobody listens and you don't know what to do,
come to the Copaneca Women's Center.

We will help you!!!

Come, don't be afraid...



It's his fault.

Figure 14: *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca* Pamphlet.
Come to the *Copaneca* Women's Center.

Some of my basic rights...

1. Be treated with respect.
2. Make a mistake without being punished or chastised.
3. Express my feelings and ideas.
4. Live without fear, threats, humiliations or violence.
5. Be independent.
6. Take care of myself and my health.



A



7. Study and learn.

8. Freely choose my profession, my work, my job.

9. Value myself and make important decisions for my family, my community, my municipality and my country.

10. Decide how many children I want to have.

Your are important.

Let others know that.

B

Figure 15: *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca* Pamphlet. A) Some of my basic rights 1-6. B) Some of my basic rights 7-10.



**Responsibilities and
Opportunities for Men
and Women**

**We don't look alike,
but we are equals...**

with the same rights and obligations.



Figure 16: *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca* Pamphlet.
Género y Equidad [Gender and Equality]

(Source: *Centro de la Mujer Copaneca*, Santa Rosa de Copán, 2006)

APPENDIX C

DRAWINGS FOR A 2008 AWARENESS CAMPAIGN COMMEMORATING VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IN HONDURAS.



And your rights...How are they?

Figure 17: Drawing for a 2008 awareness campaign commemorating victims of violence in Honduras. And your rights...How are they?



Silence and Violence

Figure 18: Drawing for a 2008 awareness campaign commemorating victims of violence in Honduras. Silence and Violence.



**If you continue to teach us differently...we
will continue to behave that way.**

Figure 19: Drawing for a 2008 awareness campaign commemorating victims of violence in Honduras. If you continue to teach us differently...
we will continue to behave that way.

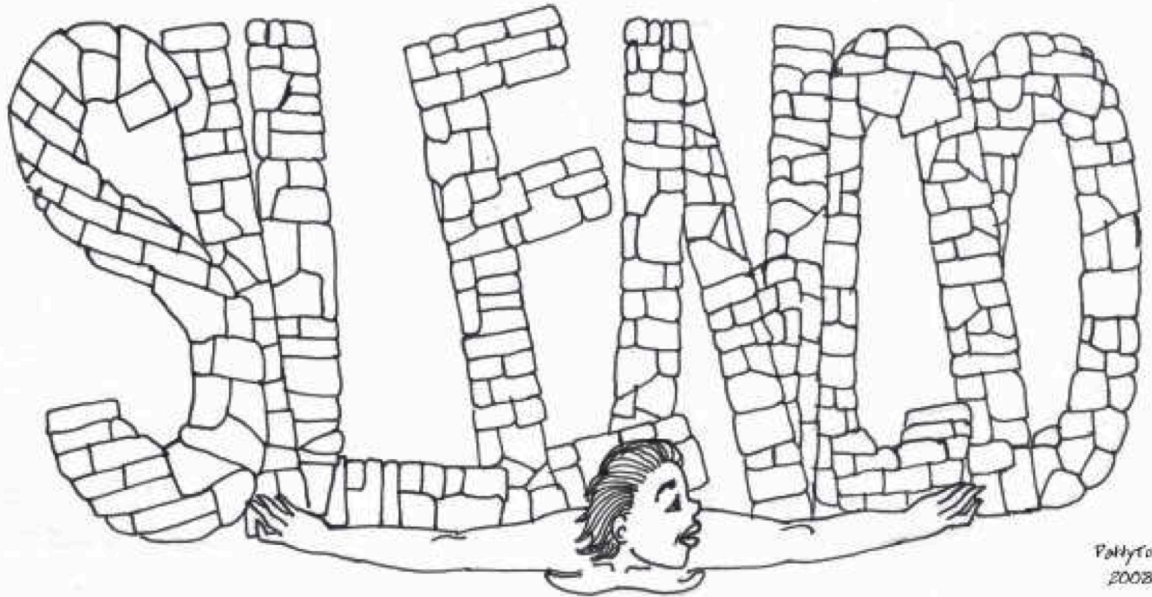
¡Ni una muerta más!



Not one more dead!

Figure 20: Drawing for a 2008 awareness campaign commemorating victims of violence in Honduras. Not one more dead!

No dejés que te aplaste...DENUNCIÁ



Silence

Don't let it crush you...Speak Up.

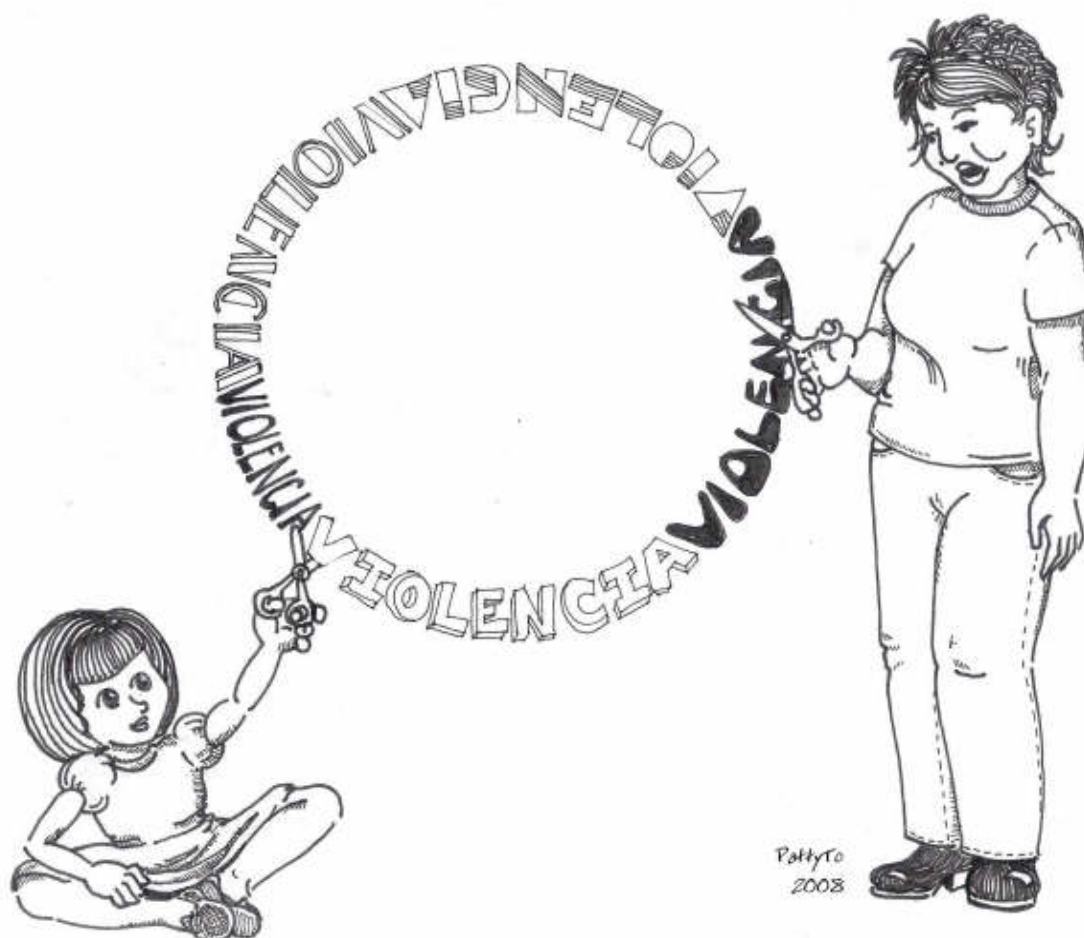
[report domestic violence]

Figure 21: Drawing for a 2008 awareness campaign commemorating victims of violence in Honduras. Silence. Don't let it crush you...Speak Up.
[report domestic violence]



Femicide does not discriminate...
it has to be stopped now!

Figure 22: Drawing for a 2008 awareness campaign commemorating victims of violence in Honduras. Femicide does not discriminate... it has to be stopped now!



Violence, Violence, Violence, Violence, Violence

Cut the circle of violence.

Figure 23: Drawing for a 2008 awareness campaign commemorating victims of violence in Honduras. Violence, Violence, Violence, Violence, Violence.
Cut the circle of violence.

(Source: Centro de la Mujer Copaneca, Santa Rosa de Copán, 2008)

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Darlene Metcalf-Bergeron was born in Hiram, Maine on July 23, 1959. She was raised and lived on a farm in Porterfield, Maine until she began her higher education studies at Husson College in 1978 after graduating Valedictorian from Sacopee Valley High School in South Hiram, Maine. After getting her ABS in Small Business Management from Husson, she took the chance of a lifetime and moved to Caracas, Venezuela to learn Spanish, not knowing what the world had in store for her. Once in Caracas, Darlene quickly acquired the language, however her grammar skills weren't up to par, so she decided to enroll in the *Centro Venezolano-Americano* to improve her formal language skills before it was time to go back home and "get a real job," as her brother often told her over the phone.

As life would have it, after spending a year in Venezuela, Darlene felt very comfortable and wasn't ready to go home just yet. Therefore, she decided to take her brother's advice and "got a real job"... right there in Caracas. Her English skills were highly marketable and, given the fact that her Spanish and cultural awareness was better than just about every other American working and/or living in Venezuela, she became very marketable, thus finding a job would not be a problem. In fact during her first year she had built up a huge network within the country and was offered a job managing a dental clinic for a Harvard trained orthodontist, where her English skills were needed due to the large number of expatriate patients. At the same time, she also got an evening job teaching English to Venezuelan businessmen looking to improve their language skills.

After working for a few years at the dental clinic, Darlene got a job working at the Venezuelan headquarters of an American accounting firm, Peat Marwick, which quickly merged with a Dutch accounting firm KMG, forming the international powerhouse firm KPMG. Darlene worked for KPMG for many years and left because she went to Paris, France to continue her studies where she received her *diplôme de licence* in LEA [langues étrangères appliquées] from *l'Université de Paris 8 – Vincennes à Saint-Denis* in 1994.

Darlene has lived in several countries and is lucky to have been exposed to so many countries, their cultures and communities. This has deeply guided her life and has been essential in the work she does today as a medical and State of Maine and Federal judicial interpreter. She is a candidate for the Master of Arts degree in Liberal Studies from The University of Maine in December 2013.